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# Chocholá Ceramics and the Polities of Northwestern Yucatán

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# Chocholá Ceramics and the Polities of Northwestern Yucatán

by

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**Dissertation**

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To all my two, three and four legged friends and family

past and present

*thank you*

**Acknowledgments**

I would like to begin by thanking my advisor, David Stuart. I benefited greatly from his chapter-by-chapter comments as well as our repeated discussions regarding various arcane Chocholá issues. I would never have completed the dissertation as it stands today without David's gentle guidance and humorous outlook on the things so many of us still fail to understand. My doctoral career is, of course, composed of more than my dissertation work and I would like to thank David for his assistance and continued support regarding obtaining permissions and other administrative concerns, especially as I pursue publication avenues—I plan to publish the Chocholá corpus in its entirety in conjunction with my ongoing work on the topic.

I found invaluable the conversations I had and the feedback I received from my committee members, George Bey, Steve Bourget, Julia Guernsey, Athanasio Papalexandrou, Karl Taube and Dorie Reents-Budet. As a group, they provided a multiplicity of viewpoints that is invaluable to the interdisciplinary approach I have formulated. I would also like to thank each person individually for providing constructive criticism and for taking the time to meet with me in the midst of busy schedules. What is more, each of these scholars' involvement with my academic career is much longer lasting than their appearance on my committee indicates. I always come out of conversations with George, for instance, with renewed energy and my head whirling with exciting new ideas for publication and future research projects. I also could not have done this without his constructive criticism; George has the unparalleled ability to ask a question that initially seems to be a simple request for clarification. In many cases, though, after some time passed I realized that the same question continued to nag me, and must require more examination on my part (sorry, George, if I have been a bit slow on the uptake at times!). Steve and Julia have also provided a constant presence and helped me make the transition from my Masters under Nikolai Grube at the University of Texas to my doctoral work under his successor, David Stuart. All along the way, I have found both Julia and Steve readily available and happy to discuss any issue I might be facing with a level of intellect and an awareness of academic politics I find amazing to this day.

The excitement with which Nassos (Athanasio) approaches ceramics (not to mention his help on other fronts) and his perspective, conditioned by his Classical specialization, continues to inform my work. Last, but certainly not least, I remember meeting Karl and Dorie back when I was a Masters student, awed by these academics of whose work I had read so much. Their good-natured, humorous yet still highly intellectual natures quickly set me at ease and in each case I immediately began asking them various questions about Pabellon Molded-Carved vessels, my pet project at the time. I am deeply thankful that they have continued to return my emails, even after I asked them to fulfill the demanding and financially unrewarding roles of committee members. I find my advisor's and my committee members' continued support of paramount importance and cannot find the words to express the depth of my gratitude. As always, any mistakes within this document are my own.

No work on the Chocholá style could hope to achieve any measure of success without the involvement of the scholars who have worked on the style previously. Traci Ardren, Carolyn Tate, Michael Coe and Nikolai Grube have all given generously of their time. All have kindly responded to my continuous, pesky esoteric questions about their interpretations of the Chocholá style. What is more, these scholars have been extremely generous in sharing works from their respective image databases and/or giving me permission to include their drawings in my dissertation. For all of this, I can never thank them enough.

As I indicate at the outset of the dissertation, the Chocholá style is heavily looted. Only a few scattered remains have any kind of archaeological provenience. For this reason, it was of the utmost importance that I access the Centro Regional Yucatán—Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (CRY—INAH) and locate any Chocholá pieces. Arqueologas (arqlgas.) Sylviane Boucher and Yoly Palomo (CRY—INAH) were especially kind and helpful in this respect. They, along with Licenciada Frederica Sodi Miranda, allowed me to enter the Ceramoteca and draw those pieces relating to my area of interest. They also facilitated the permission process at CRY—INAH. I am able to include several of the aforementioned drawings in my dissertation due to their efforts on

my behalf. Without their assistance, my work would lack much of the data it so desperately needs in order to provide a location-based anchor. I would also like to thank CRY—INAH generally and specifically the archaeologists who individually control the type collections from which I drew and who gave me permission to use my drawings.

In attempting to expand my corpus I visited the Palacio Cantón during my time in Mérida. I found Directora Blanca González to be extremely helpful. She allowed me to see vessels in storage as well as those on display. Indeed, the storage collections include a particularly important piece for investigations into Maya aesthetics and I thank Directora González for her assistance. Dr. Peter Schmidt also richly deserves recognition as he facilitated my initial conversations with Directora González in addition to providing feedback regarding some Chocholá questions I continue to grapple with.

I would also like to thank a number of people with whom I have had extensive conversations specifically focused on Chocholá concerns, which continues to inform my academic outlook. Erik Boot has been a constant source of inspiration, and I am indebted to him for his generosity in sharing images as well as for our extensive academic exchanges. I have also benefited greatly from other conversations with Carlos Pallán Gayol, Peter Keeler, Philippe Bézy, Ronald Bishop and Alex Tokovinine. Additionally, the quick responses I received from Antonio Benavides and Rafael Cobos were particularly helpful in trying to track down archaeologically provenienced Chocholá pieces. According to the old saying, it takes a village to raise a child. I would add that it takes an extended scholarly community to help one 'give birth,' as it were, to a dissertation. Erik Velázquez García formed part of my extended community and I am continually thankful for his good cheer as well as his thoughtful responses to my ideas. Dominique Michelet, Tomás Gallareta Negrón, Alfonso Lacadena and Ana García form another part of this community and while my interaction with them was brief, they kindly listened to my quarries. Their answers have proved to be extremely important regarding Chocholá distribution in addition to providing future avenues of exploration. Hanns Prem and Iken Paap were also particularly helpful and I would like to personally thank Iken for extensive assistance in tracking down illustrations related to the analysis of

excavations at Xkipché conducted by German students. Indeed, without being asked, Iken translated sections of a thesis from German into English in the effort to make my job easier—I cannot begin to repay such kindness.

In speaking of images, I would be remiss if I did not begin by explicitly thanking Justin and Barbara Kerr, without whose work and kind sharing of images, none of this would have been possible. The Kerrs' public presentation of their photography has vastly expanded the corpus of elite Maya ceramics. Furthermore, Justin is responsible for the majority of photographs that appear in this dissertation and without his work, not only would the Maya ceramic corpus be smaller, the Chocholá place in that body of work would be absolutely infinitesimal.

Those who have assisted me in obtaining image permissions also deserve my sincere gratitude. My thanks go to Matthew Robb (Assistant Curator, Ancient American & Native American Art) and Rachel Swiston (both at the Saint Louis Art Museum) for their assistance. Matthew and I have had a few interesting conversations about the pieces in the SLAM collections and associated museum concerns, for which I am grateful. Judith Strupp Green called my attention to a piece currently housed in the San Diego Museum of Man and I would like to thank her and Kate Vogel (Exhibits and Graphics Coordinator) for their assistance in obtaining permission to include images of this calabash shaped bowl in my own work. I also wish to recognize Diane Cotts (Assistant Director, University of Okalahoma Press), Chris Schwartz (OU Press Rights and Permissions, University of Okalahoma Press), Jackie Maman (Image Rights Licensing Coordinator, The Art Institute of Chicago), Henri Stielin (private collector), Elizabeth Saluk (Rights and Reproductions Coordinator, The Cleveland Museum of Art), Stacey Gannon-Wright (Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University), Sandra Noble (Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, Inc., FAMSI), Susan Otto (Museum Librarian, Milwaukee Public Museum), Maria Gaida (Leiterin der Sammlung Mesoamerika, Ethnologisches Museum Berlin); Patricia Virasin Tainter (Assistant Registrar, Kimbell Art Museum), Christina Green (Collections Manager, Gardiner Museum), Elin Danien (Archives of the University of Pennsylvania Museum) and Stacy

Goodman (Senior Consultant, Pre-Columbian Art, Sotheby's) as well as the institutions with which they are associated for their help. Furthermore, without a resource like FAMSI, the world of Mayanists would be poorer.

In relation to the images I use, I am indebted to a few additional people. David Joralemon, John Taylor and Marc Gaede all provided helpful suggestions when I was trying to track down the sources for several images. What is more, all kindly gave me permission to use images of theirs. Nicholas Hellmuth, another person responsible for expanding the image corpus, proved to be generous in providing permission as well, for which I thank him.

Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank those who made this work possible in more pragmatic and programmatic contexts. I was fortunate enough to be selected for the Millsaps College Teaching Fellowship in Art the year prior to completing my dissertation. The fellowship was designed intentionally to provide teaching experience while also, with a two-one teaching schedule, encouraging research outside of the classroom. The Millsaps community, including Elise Smith, Sandra Murchison and Brent Fogt in the Art Department, Kristen Oertel in History, and Sarah Bares in Modern Languages, to name just a few, actively encouraged scholarly work in addition to teaching excellence. The time I enjoyed as a Millsaps fellow combined with the continual discussions and Works in Progress meetings I attended enabled me to finish this year.

My friends and family have provided much needed moral support, especially during those moments when I was certain the Maya of antiquity could see through time and had introduced odd iconographic and hieroglyphic forms just to upset my mental stability. I do not have either the time or the space to name everyone individually and beg the forgiveness of those I have not mentioned explicitly. I particularly want to thank my parents, Hope and George Werness, and my grandmother, Joanne Benedict, who provided welcome moral and financial support. My friends and colleagues, Nila LaVanaway, Rina Faletti and Penny Steinbach offered their support and the willingness to listen to all issues Chocholá—and dissertation—related over the last five years—at

times I must have sounded like a broken record. Hope, Nila and Rina also did me the great favor of proof reading sections of the dissertation and called my attention to passages that would benefit from greater clarity. Indeed, my dissertation would be much the worse for wear without their eagle eyes and any mistakes that remain are mine alone. What is more, without the weekly 'deadlines' and check-ins Rina and I set for ourselves in completing our respective projects, I would probably still be working on early chapters to this day. I would also like to thank my partner, Jeff Rude, for his calm, quiet, levelheaded presence and unwavering emotional support. Perhaps it goes without saying, but without my family, I would not be here, and without my family and friends, I would be much less successful, confident and content.

# Chocholá Ceramics and the Polities of Northwestern Yucatán

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2010
Supervisor: David Stuart

Maya artists working in the northern Yucatán Peninsula c. 700-800 CE began creating a new ceramic style. Deeply carved and exhibiting complex iconography and hieroglyphic inscriptions, Chocholá ceramics have long been recognized as among the most beautiful items produced by ancient Maya craftsmen. Indeed, the Chocholá style can be associated with a number of firsts in Maya studies: the first published explorations, the first major art historical investigations of ceramics, the first attempts at ceramic seriation and the first translations of the dedicatory formula all include images of Chocholá pots. Many examples lack provenience, however, due to extensive looting and the corpus has been relegated to a shadowy corner of the Maya world as a result.

With the aid of new archaeological information and advances in iconographic and epigraphic studies, I develop an interdisciplinary rubric for classifying Chocholá pieces. Additionally, I analyze vessel imagery and texts, thus deciphering ostensible meanings as well as identifying the kinds of messages elites were trying to project through ownership and exchange. As with other high-status commodities, these ceramics functioned as prestige items and facilitated regional alliances through gifting and feasting. An analysis of temporal setting illuminates the aesthetic innovation and traditionalism Chocholá patrons manipulated in order to legitimize their own standing in such contexts.

My work results in a more refined picture of extended northern socio-political interaction and interconnection. I show that one extremely powerful site—Oxkintok, in the hilly Puuc region of Yucatán—produced such vessels and disseminated them south, west and northeast. In dialogue with Oxkintok's expanding sphere of political influence, stylistic variations also developed in these outlying regions. Ultimately, I use the confluence of data to reconstruct a more concrete system of intra-regional connection and interchange.

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# Introduction

> Pictorial ceramics, whether painted or carved, are to be ranked among the finest artistic creations of the Classic Maya civilization…. It can be demonstrated that these remarkable vessels describe a strange and esoteric world which is barely alluded to in the stone monuments and in the surviving books.
>
> Michael Coe (1973: 11)

## *Introduction*

Maya civilization experienced almost continuous growth in Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador beginning in the Pre-Classic (before 300 CE) (fig. 1). Geographically, the Maya world can be separated into three main regions—the northern lowlands, covering the Yucatán Peninsula; the southern lowlands, centered in the Petén region of Guatemala; and the highlands yet further to the south and southeast. By the early Classic period (c. 300-1000 CE), the Maya had fully solidified architectural and ceramic programs displaying hieroglyphs and imagery relating to the cosmogonies, the social structure and the institution of divine kingship (see Fields and Reents-Budet 2005; Miller 1986: 103-120; Schele and Miller 1986: especially 9-61). During this early period, northern and southern lowland areas developed seemingly in concert (García Campillo 1991; Varela Torrecilla 1998). By at least the Middle Classic (500-600 CE), however, in conjunction with growing interregionalism and intercultural exchanges, the northern lowland Maya began rejecting certain expressions of material culture popular in the south and explored alternate ways of approaching sociopolitical interrelationships (Bey, Peraza and Ringle 1992: 16; Varela Torrecilla 1998: 214-215, 2002: 66).[1] Elites in the hilly Puuc region of the northern Yucatán Peninsula also localized power at several major sites, like Oxkintok. Indeed, by the Late Classic (600-849 CE), the political structure at Oxkintok seems to have changed from a segmentary system to one favoring a

[1] Evidence suggests that such interregional and intercultural exchanges began much earlier (Bey 2006: 24, 28).

centralized ruler (García Campillo and Fernández Marquínez 1995; Varela Torrecilla 1998; Varela Torrecilla and Montero Ruiz 1995). The northern shift away from southern manifestations of elite culture in the Middle and Late Classic periods affected the techniques used to construct buildings as well as those employed in creating ceramics and other luxury goods. Indeed, ceramicists began developing a different kind of paste that, when fired, resulted in less porous, less breakable wares (Varela Torrecilla 1998: 28, 2002: 68). In cases where the craftsman removed or ground down course inclusions, this technology also allowed for particularly thin vessel walls (see Brainerd 1958). Because of the harder, fine-grained quality of the paste, such ceramics are called slatewares and, by favoring incising and carving, reflect a shift away from southern traditions, particularly those associated with polychrome decoration (Brainerd 1958; Varela Torrecilla 1998). By the Terminal Classic period (849-1000 CE), architectural expression had coalesced in the mosaic facades now known as the Puuc style while slatewares dominated all pottery types (both 'utilitarian' and non-utilitarian) and formed the Cehpech ceramic complex (see Brainerd 1958).[2] It is in the transitional Late Classic climate that artists created a carved type of vessel now called the Chocholá style while

[2] A ceramic complex is made up of all the vessels that can be categorized and associated with a particular time and place. Gifford (1976: 11) has defined the term as

> the sum of total modes and varieties (types) that comprises the full ceramic content of an archaeological unit…. The content of any one ceramic complex is what is known of all the pottery utilized by an archaeological culture in a certain geographical setting and during a particular interval of prehistoric time.

Please see my subsequent discussion of the type-variety model on page 4.

I am uncomfortable with the differentiation between 'utilitarian' and non-utilitarian (i.e. luxury) items. The disjunction that such a distinction implies suggests that luxury items were not utilitarian in the strictest sense and served only an aesthetic purpose. Yet many such objects like pots and plates were certainly utilitarian in the sense that they were actively, if carefully, used as food or drink containers. I continue to use the term with the caveat that it is to be understood here as 'solely utilitarian' as opposed to those items that function at both utilitarian and aesthetic levels.

also developing the slateware technology that characterizes the subsequent Cehpech complex (fig. 2).[3]

The Chocholá style is difficult to introduce briefly because so much of the historical understanding of the style is based largely on supposition. Where was it made, when, by whom and for whom? Did it travel after production? Why was it made? Until recently, the answers to these and other questions have remained vague—potters created vessels in the Chocholá style in the northern Yucatán Peninsula towards the end of the Classic period as a luxury ware for elites (see Ardren 1996; Coe 1973; Grube 1990; Tate 1985). According to scholarly literature, the vessels were then likely sent to diverse locations, as evidenced by imprecise reports provided by modern looters, dealers or collectors (e.g. Coe 1973) and/or general eyewitness accounts from early excavations (e.g. Stephens 1843). The detailed iconography and carved inscriptions have led to a high demand for these pots in the current art market and many examples have been excavated illicitly at sites in the Yucatán Peninsula to satisfy this demand.[4] Thus, the lack of archaeological anchors has meant that what little is known about the Chocholá style derives largely from the ceramics themselves. Such illegal activities have destroyed contextual information and have led many scholars to ignore looted remains on principle (see Miller 1989b: 137, 140). While I deplore the circumstances that have led to the de-contextualization of the style, I follow in the footsteps of Michael Coe and other scholars

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[3] See García Campillo and Fernández Marquínez (1995: 137) and Varela Torrecilla and Montero Ruiz (1995: 162) for a similar dating schema. Varela Torrecilla (1998: 13-15) dated the Middle Classic to 400-700 CE and the Late Classic to 700-800 CE.

Many of the images I include take the form of rollout photographs (like figs. 2-4). The resulting linearity often implies a certain viewing order, which, in turn, can suggest narrative structure. The modern viewer must constantly remind him or herself that the rollout photograph is an artificial construct that does not necessarily coincide with artistic intention (Maya craftsmen often indicated "reading order" through devices like directional gazes). Such vessels also required viewer interaction—the vessel often must be turned for the scene to unfold fully.

[4] In addition to such extensive looting, the fact that theses and Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) excavation reports are often not published results in a further paucity of specific information regarding the style. Additionally, access to both the field reports and the ceramic collections held in regional INAH centers is often restricted.

in studying a largely unprovenienced body of material. Indeed, throughout the present work, I attempt to contextualize the Chocholá style, beginning with data garnered from recent, sanctioned excavations responsible for unearthing a small number of Chocholá vessels.

Known for their deep carving, elaborate use of complex iconography and sophisticated hieroglyphic texts, Chocholá style vessels clearly served as an elite ware.[5] Scholars currently categorize Maya ceramics based on the type-variety model. Following James Gifford (1976: 9), a type "is a ceramic unit that is recognizably distinct as to certain visual or tactile characteristics. A type represents an aggregate of distinct ceramic attributes that is indicative of a particular category of pottery produced during a specific time interval within a specific region." Defining attributes include aspects of vessel form and surface treatment. Types can be further subdivided into individual varieties, which "may be distinguished from all others in the matter of one or a relatively small number of attributes" (Gifford 1976: 10). This manner of sorting and classifying ceramics is widely used (see Adams 1971; Gifford 1976; Pool Cab 1997), even though it has several acknowledged problems.[6]

Chocholá vessels do not fit neatly into the type-variety classificatory system. Indeed, they seem to represent a shifting conceptual group created by a number of potters working in centers scattered across the northwestern Yucatán Peninsula. A particular manner of approaching imagery and the rendition of hieroglyphic texts remained relatively consistent while the paste type and even vessel shape varied. Such diversity occurred within identifiable parameters, however, and certain vessel forms and pastes were favored (stylistic outliers can probably be connected with different locations of manufacture).

While Chocholá pieces do not individually indicate any hesitancy in technique or uncertainty in the creative vision(s) of their makers, the style as a whole functioned as a

[5] For discussions of the appearance of other wares as indicative of their luxury status, see, for example, Reents-Budet (1994, 1998; et al. 2006).
[6] For a pragmatic critique of the type-variety model, please see Patrick Culbert and Robert Rands' (2007) work on the subject.

transitional group. It bridged ceramic traditions connected with the Middle Classic and those linked with the Late and Terminal Classic. Such a shift involved the redefinition of almost all pottery types concurrent with the development of the heavily slateware-based Cehpech complex. Throughout my consideration of the Chocholá style, I explore the following methodological question: Is such ceramic residue simply a reflection of economic networks? Or does the Chocholá style indicate a concerted effort to maintain and/or establish a far-reaching sociopolitical network of alliances radiating out from Oxkintok, significantly one of the northern sites to explicitly name a king in the monumental inscriptions at this time?

With a review and analysis of earlier publications and newly available material, I propose to cut through much of the uncertainty surrounding the style. I provide a detailed (though by no means exhaustive) review of the current data available for the style in my next chapter and in doing so discuss several scholarly trends in the literature to date. In Chapter 3, I begin my consideration of the Chocholá style proper by building a stylistic system of classification that governs both my subsequent definition of the style in the same chapter and my approach to the Chocholá place in the northern ceramic record as a whole. I use my clearly defined corpus to survey Chocholá iconographic tropes and themes in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, I analyze the hieroglyphic texts found so frequently on these pots. Throughout my discussion, I use newly excavated vessels to provide some secure archaeological provenience for the style. A careful comparison between these examples and other unprovenienced pieces further anchors the style at several northern centers. An awareness of geographic distribution, while still in its infancy, allows me to begin exploring the regional and temporal implications of the style, which are inherently connected to sociopolitical and economic concerns, as I indicate in my sixth and seventh chapters.

First, however, I consider some of the different ways archaeologists and anthropologists have studied ancient Maya ceramics in order to introduce the Chocholá style. The study of pottery production systems yields important insights even in cases where most of the formal body of evidence has been decontextualized (i.e. looted). An

awareness of efficiency, standardization, evolutionary processes and the role of selection has the potential to partially explain the choices made by Chocholá potters. Furthermore, investigating multi-dimensional patterns of dissemination and consumption and context can result in a better understanding of the way these vessels originally functioned besides simply acting as containers for beverages or food items. Additionally, a consideration of potting community locations, sizes and composition can uncover important implications regarding site hierarchies and interrelationships. Ultimately, an investigation of production and consumption that goes beyond a superficial discussion of dissemination patterns requires in-depth iconographic and epigraphic analysis. Such analytic specificity has the potential to illuminate patterns of ideological, non-verbal communication and particular sociopolitical, economic and religious exchanges. Aside from simply 'reading' an image or text, what methods are particularly useful in trying to arrive at an emic (i.e. internal) interpretation of the vessels as objects in a particular cultural sub-system? As part of a relatively young field that has witnessed the rise and fall of several different academic approaches (see Miller 1989b and Chapter 2), where does the scholar interested in ancient ceramic material begin and what tools or approaches provide particularly useful interpretive data? In an effort to answer this question, I investigate several different approaches that have characterized the study of iconography and glyphic texts in the field and in relation to Chocholá vessels specifically. Any academic approach to ceramics should begin with the attempt to understand the mechanics of production, however, before exploring the types of information that function as part of a meta-narrative.

### *Pottery Production Models*

An awareness of manufacturing processes can have an impact on the modern construction of ancient meta-narratives. Efficient or inefficient production models, for example, as defined in relation to "the amount of energy (time) and raw material input per unit of output," can be linked to ideological power in certain cases (Costin 2001:

289).[7] Chocholá vessels do not fit an efficient production model in the sense that the potter must have dedicated a considerable amount of time to carving the image and/or inscribing the text(s). Indeed, it is this aspect of Chocholá production that, when combined with its exclusivity (i.e. restricted visibility, distribution and strong stylistic coherence), solidifies its status as an elite luxury item or commodity.

Vessel forms, typically understood to be sensitive indicators of change (see Arnold 2008: 311-313), coallese in a few widely used variants and paste types exhibit homogeneity to a lesser degree (see Chapter 3).[8] Such uniformity reflects an overarching

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[7] See Pool (1992: 278-279) and Costin (2001: 289-290) for further discussions of efficiency as an evaluative category, separate from scale or intensity. Shanks (1999: 38-40, 49-50, 166-168) discusses similar issues in relation to incised and painted Greek vessels from Korinth. In a contextual moment not so different, in a general sense, from that associated with Chocholá production (consisting of political change and an interplay, in the ceramic medium, between innovation and tradition combined with technological shifts), Shanks associates the selection of incising prior to, and as a guide for, painted designs with higher risk. Indeed, he found that such ceramic 'experimentation' initially occurred in a small number of workshops (in contrast to other locations of manufacture focused on producing standard vessel forms in large numbers). Shanks (1999: 168) further suggested that such risk, combined with specific iconographic choice indicated that "the small perfume jars displaying this miniature figuration…point to a political aesthetics of the body, appeal[ing] somewhat to notions of self and identity." Shanks (1999: 38) connected such risk with technical/formal concerns:

> A mistake in painting could be corrected perhaps—the oxide slip wiped off. But the incision through the applied slip into the body of the pot was a scar that could not easily be removed. Incision marks decision, finality, and risk of spoiling the work's regulated surface and decoration.

One could extend such a conception of risk to the realm of reception as well—will the new forms/decorative types receive acceptance? Clearly modes of distribution and exchange also have an impact on reception, especially since the commercialized supply and demand model of production does not adequately explain the personal and political relationships inherent in ancient Maya patterns of elite pottery movement associated with significant sociopolitical events, feasts, funerary rituals, etc.

[8] As Varela Torrecilla (1998: 28) noted, in her consideration of the Middle Classic period, Oxkintok ceramics

> se produce un cambio sustancial en su manufactura y en su concepción. El paso de la policromía a la monocromía y la mejora técnica en la dureza de las pastas (cambios en la composición y tipo de cocción) va a permitir y desembocar en el ulterior desarrollo de la cerámica pizzara. Esta producción cerámica con su alta estandarización formal y productiva es

pattern of standardization probably connected with the development of the Cehpech complex. This ceramic complex accounted for almost all northern pottery production in the Terminal Classic and attributes associated with the complex began appearing in the Late Classic and earlier (Bey, Peraza and Ringle 1992; Brainerd 1958; Smyth et al. 1995; Varela Torrecilla 1998). Technological choice acted as one factor dictating the development of slateware types—they are less porous and less prone to breakage (Varela Torrecilla 1998: 28, 2002: 68)—but other, inherently social factors also contributed to processes of selection.[9] Some aspects of Chocholá vessel form are particularly characteristic of Cehpech production while others anticipate the emphasis on standardization evident in that Terminal Classic complex. Furthermore, in addition to an interest in technological developments, elite patronage certainly governed the manufacture of Chocholá ceramics, related to the need to express status, legitimacy and to solidify and/or physically acknowledge sociopolitical interrelationships. Many of the pastes used to create Chocholá pieces come from elite-controlled sources, in all likelihood linked with an early expression of slateware manufacture later adapted to form the predominantly slateware based Cehpech sphere (Chapter 7).[10]

The growing efficiency in form and paste contrasts with inefficient decoration techniques, which occurred at various stages in the production process. Chocholá potters

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> un indicador bastante plausible del fortalecimiento de un poder central que pudo controlar una producción hasta entonces altamente variable y que constituye uno de sus rasgos de identidad.

Consistency in vessel form also may have aided in the process of 'formatting' the design (see Arnold 2008: 324).

[9] See also James Whitley's (1991: 16) theoretical discussion of style as inherently social. Technological choice is not exclusive. As Arnold (2008: 13), in studying a modern Maya potting community in Ticul, noted, "Human choices thus have multiple dimensions—social, economic, technological, and religious—with multiple layers of complexity." He also stated, "Potters may make technological choices for what may appear to be technical reasons, but in reality, such choices are also made for social reasons even though the choices may have a technical basis" (Arnold 2008: 324).

[10] Ardren (2008, pers. comm.) suggested that the paste originated from elite controlled sources based on personal examination of both slatewares and Chocholá pieces, which demonstrate high paste quality with consistently few inclusions, combined with sophisticated surface treatment.

dedicated a significant amount of time to creating the imagery and text prior to firing and to adding designs in trickle or post-fire paint as well as applying stucco (subsequently painted) to the uncarved surface in some cases (figs. 2, 3, 4).[11] The resulting products marked the intellectual, elite standing of their owner/patron while also sending specific ideological messages relating to legitimacy, power relationships and so on (Chapters 4, 5). Thus, while surface treatment led to an inefficient use of time in one sense, because the constellation of attributes described above were needed to communicate socially specific themes, Chocholá production was efficient in another sense.[12] Furthermore, in comparison to painted earthenwares, the creation of carved vessels may have been less technically challenging and taken a shorter amount of time: polychrome traditions required the manufacture of slip, which, in itself, is an extremely time consuming and sensitive process with a greater potential for failure due to even the smallest change in clay, water and/or deflocculant (Dorie Reents-Budet 2010, pers. comm.).

Scholars have often used evolutionary processes to explain patterns of selection or choice. According to Dean Arnold (2008: 11),

> The evolutionary model is…based on using selection to explain change. Selection operates on two interrelated levels that affect both production and distribution. On the first level, the forces of selection act on the population as a whole to eliminate or favor individual potters (or specialists) just as in biological evolution. The second level involves the ceramic vessel itself and includes changing factors of demand that a population of consumers uses to acquire, or not acquire, a pot.

In relation to the first level, then, I argue that the political and economic atmosphere in and around Oxkintok circa 700 CE facilitated the development of a highly specialized group of ceramicists connected with the governing apparatus. In relation to the second level, a dominant patron, the Oxkintok lord **OHL-si-?-TOK'**, likely required stylistic

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[11] Reents-Budet (2009, pers. comm.) has suggested that the creative process took approximately twenty hours from start to finish, not including drying time.

[12] See in particular Costin's (2001: 290) discussion of the problematic nature of efficiency: "In systems in which decoration, materials, and techniques themselves invest objects with politically and socially necessary meaning, then all material and labor inputs are integral to the basic, emically defined function of the object."

cohesion in the artistic population and thus dictated certain aspects of Chocholá production including, but not limited to, iconographic choices, titular references and even the specific methods used for creating such textual and pictorial elements. In this sense, Chocholá potters were most likely attached specialists (such as 'palace craftsmen'), a concept discussed by Costin (1991: 11) that I will explore in subsequent sections. Unfortunately, no detailed archaeological evidence regarding the location of pottery making units in and around Oxkintok exists at this time and throughout the present work, I organize and analyze data from a wide variety of sources in order to examine the question of Chocholá production and Oxkintok's possible role in its development.

In terms of ancient Maya ceramic production, the specific conditions that resulted in Chocholá ceramics were short-lived, and archaeological and stylistic evidence suggests that the style itself only survived for between fifty and one hundred years (see Chapter 6), concurrent with the rule of one paramount lord at Oxkintok and perhaps one (or at the most two) succeeding generation(s) of rulers. Because of the short time frame in which they were created, Chocholá vessels should reflect a specific sociopolitical, socioeconomic, religious and environmental context tied to particular elite concerns.[13] Pots made to serve ritual, ideological and/or religious functions also indicate conservatism in vessel form (and presumably iconographic choices).[14] While the dating schema for Chocholá vessels is admittedly broad, with no specific indication of chronological difference within the fifty to one hundred years spanning production, those vessels that can be connected with Oxkintok seem to remain consistent across examples and only vary within set parameters. Their consistency is unsurprising in this context since they would certainly have functioned in ritualized sociopolitical contexts including feasting events (Houston and Stuart 2001: 69; Looper, Reents-Budet 1994: 74-86; Reents-Budet and Bishop 2009: 148; Reents-Budet et al. 2000: 116-117). Indeed, each of

[13] This suggestion is supported by the geographic restriction of the style as well, please see my subsequent comments on the next page.

[14] Arnold (2008: 313) indicated that modern Day of the Dead ceremonies required particular ceramic types and forms that had not changed over the thirty years during which he conducted his study. Furthermore, some potters only created vessels preceding the Day of the Dead events and at no other time during the year.

the iconographic choices function within a larger, Chocholá legitimizing program that connects young lords with the underworld (Chapter 4) while the text strings typically emphasize high status titles like *bakab* and *kalomte'* (Chapter 5).

At another analytic level, systems of distribution complement such suggestions of ideologically based interaction (see Rice 1987: 191-200). As Pool and Bey (2007: 13) have noted, "because the acts of distribution materialize the social relationships among participants, distribution is the economic phenomenon most imbued with social meaning, notwithstanding the fact that meaning also adheres to the creation of craft items as well as to their use and display." Ultimately, the finished pots would have been distributed according to multiple patterns of dissemination. Some stayed at Oxkintok, but the bulk of vessels were sent to other locations both near and remote: archaeological data and general reports indicate that some pieces, for example, probably traveled to Tiho (Mérida) or down into the Ticul area (fig. 5; Chapters 2, 6). During this time (although not necessarily as a direct result of receiving ceramic models from Oxkintok), potters at sites both close to Oxkintok—e.g. Xcalumkin—and those at some distance—e.g. Jaina—also appear to have created Chocholá style vessels. It is significant that in this Late Classic sociopolitical context, *sacbes* (i.e. raised, white roads) were built at Oxkintok and connected disparate areas of the center as well as extending out from the site to the north, south, east and west (López de la Rosa and Velázquez Morlet 1992: 206-210; Plank 2004: 73). Not surprisingly, many of the carved pots looted from northern sites entered the market via Maxcanú (i.e. Oxkintok) and Chocholá, as Coe (1973) recognized in naming the style. The Oxkintok ruins were long called Maxcanú (David Stuart 2009, pers. comm.) and Chocholá is the closest major town in the area, approximately fifteen miles from Maxcanú/Oxkintok. Maxcanú, furthermore, still acts as a center of pottery manufacture (Thompson 1974: especially 18-19). Significantly, Ticul, another modern town connected with a Chocholá style find, is also known as a modern center of ceramic production (Thompson 1974: especially 19-20).[15] The two areas may have been

[15] While certain potters in both locations have begun experimenting with non-traditional forms and methods, traditional techniques and shapes are still well represented and mark

intimately connected anciently as they apparently were in more modern periods: according to Thompson (1974: 66), for example, modern ceramicists "know of no deposits of clay near [Maxcanú, so] they obtain [their raw clay] by exchange or purchase from other pottery-making villages." Brainerd (1958: 66) observed that Maxcanú potters obtained their raw materials from Ticul in exchange for temper specific to the Maxcanú area. The caves at Oxkintok, however, seem to provide good clay deposits and the exchange between Ticul and Maxcanú might be restricted to the modern period (or may only account for a small portion of the Oxkintok region's clay acquisition). Mérida can be added to this list; some unusual variations of the Chocholá style were found outside that modern city, which has historically been an area known for its pottery (Thompson 1974: 147).[16]

Ceramic studies have begun placing increasing emphasis on examining reception and subsequent use when possible (Pool and Bey 2007: 11-13). While data regarding consumption patterns is unfortunately imprecise in this case, pieces in the Chocholá style were restricted to the elite sphere and would certainly have been placed on display and used during important feasting events or other meetings between high status people. They were also apparently carefully kept and buried with important individuals as the large number of looted whole vessels and certain Oxkintok finds indicate. Alternately,

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a much longer ceramic making trajectory in each area (Arnold 2008; Thompson 1974: 18-20). Additionally, as Rice (1987: 177-178) noted, "One clue to the sites of prehistoric pottery manufacture is the location of contemporary potting communities; the premise is that they tend to be relatively near clay resources," although location and clay selection "may also be governed more by sociopolitical considerations and trade alliances than by the reality of the geophysical environment."

[16] Modern ethnographic analogy can provide interesting avenues for further research into the ancient framework dictating ceramic production. Dean Arnold (see particularly Arnold 2008), for instance, has long advocated the use of ethnographic analogy and has found that while a market based economy in Ticul resulted in some changes in pottery production, other aspects of manufacture remained highly traditional and resistant to change. See also Prudence Rice's (1987: 170) comments on the subject.

some Oxkintok depositional data demonstrates that vessels in the style were also actively used, broken and thrown away (Chapter 2).[17]

When the special constellation of interests that resulted in the production of the style passed, the choices made by potters also shifted in accordance with new demands made by their patrons. Certain elements repeat outside the style and allude to recurrent (though not constant) approaches, like references to the past through allusions to older Maya pictorial traditions (Chapters 4, 7). The choice of carving and monochrome surface treatments over polychrome modes of decoration also became a recurrent and constant selection at around the time of Chocholá production and continued into the Cehpech complex (Vallo 2005: 168, 170; Varela Torrecilla 1998). In this respect, Chocholá ceramics can be seen as part of a larger trajectory that emphasizes subtractive methods while maintaining monochrome painting techniques as well through the use of post-fire additions (Chapter 7).

There is still a great deal of uncertainty regarding the ancient Maya manner of 'craft' production and I would like to clarify a few additional premises that influence my approach to the Chocholá style. The social standing of the people who created such ceramics certainly had an impact on the way they practiced their craft. The location and organization of pottery production units also affects the creative process. Theoretically, a workshop, workgroup or school setting, for example, would tend to encourage stylistic cohesion while isolated ceramicists would be likely to develop a more individualized set of vessels. Regionalization, in contrast to a single highly nucleated group, would also usually result in greater stylistic variability.

Scholars generally agree that elite ceramic production was a heavily male dominated field, although epigraphic and post-conquest ethnographic information indicates that women could also play a role (see Clark and Houston 1998: especially 36-37; Foias and Bishop 2007: 233; Reents-Budet 1994: 48; Reina and Hill 1978). Another widely held belief relates to status—the artists who created such detail-oriented

[17] Of course, depositional patterns, which are scant for the Chocholá style to begin with, only reflect the final consumption of the product and not intervening uses (see Pool and Bey's [2007: 13-16] corollary discussion of distribution).

iconography and who had the capacity to add texts were most likely literate. In a largely illiterate society, these abilities can only be connected with the highest social strata (Bey 2006: 35; Houston and Stuart 1992; Inomata 2001; Reents-Budet 1994: 36-71). Thus, most believe that the potters responsible for the manufacture of luxury items, like Chocholá pieces, came from elite families and were 'attached' somehow to the ruler and the governing apparatus (Foias and Bishop 2007: 227, 233-234; Reents-Budet 1994: 47). Such noble artists only occasionally signed their work, unfortunately, even though their products were clearly associated with status and control. As Takeshi Inomata (2001: 322) has argued, "the craft activities and products of Classic Maya elite artists were ideologically loaded and…, along with the esoteric knowledge that underlay them, they helped to distinguish elites from nonelites and played a critical role in competition among elites themselves."

Several have indicated that at the highest levels, the scribe and the artist were one and the same (Coe 1977; Houston 2000; Inomata 2001: see especially 324).[18] Thus many Maya scribes were also artists, although not all artists were scribes.[19] Furthermore, Arnold (2008: 312) found that modern Ticul potters were involved in the creation process from beginning to end until demand soared and the process itself became more mechanized and "segmented." He suggested, however, that ancient Maya potters and painters of pots were probably not the same and that the potter likely gave "blanks to elite painters as a form of tribute" (Arnold 2008: 320). In the Chocholá case, the carver of imagery and text was almost certainly the same person responsible for the post-fire trickle paint additions. Since the subtractive process occurs before firing and because artistic additions continue after firing, it is most likely that one person was responsible for a given vessel from beginning to end or took over control after the basic vessel had been

[18] Ancient Athenian pottery production provides an interesting parallel: Athenian potters could also be painters but in some cases the two were associated with distinctly different artistic pursuits, as the multiple signatures found on individual vases indicate (see Robertson 1992: 3). Maya examples lack additional 'signatures' of this nature, however, and only occasionally contain nominal information regarding the producer.

[19] Conversely, it is also possible that not all scribes were artists, although they were certainly well versed in the pictorial-symbolic nature of Maya hieroglyphic writing.

formed (Reents-Budet [2009, pers. comm.] agrees). Although the gendered identity of these individuals remains unclear, if the different stages in ceramic production represent the work of different people, at the very least they probably had kin-based relationships that allowed the pot, in its highly fragile 'green' pre-fired state, to stay in one location through all the different phases of production.[20] The shift from an emphasis on painting to a more carving-centric approach, however, may reflect a desire to consolidate the process instead of involving separate painters/creators.

Regardless, many Chocholá examples speak to the knowledge and skill of their individual creators, specialized in both text and imagery. I typically use scribe, artist, artisan and craftsman interchangeably throughout. Unless I have particular reason to think the artist was not literate, I do not differentiate between such terms as I find this kind of artificial division to reflect Western ideas of status and a hierarchy of artistic forms. The ceramicists who created the 'crafts' under consideration here—i.e. Chocholá style vessels—were also clearly artists, typically with some of the highest degrees of skill found in the Maya region.

In such a context, the question of attached versus independent patterns of production becomes particularly pertinent.[21] In theoretical models, attached specialists are 'attached' to the ruling order in the sense that their work was overseen and dictated by powerful patrons. In some cases, the artisans were literally 'attached' to the elite household, although the spatial relationships were often not quite so direct (Costin 2001: 298-299). In such contexts, no separation exists between the governing apparatus and the material goods it required, especially those needed for ideological purposes. In contrast, independent craftsmen are wholly responsible for making the decisions needed to

[20] In such a kin-based system, it would not be surprising if different tasks were associated with different genders (see Inomata 2001: 330). In any case, an awareness of the difficulties associated with transporting such 'green' vessel further prolematizes Arnold's statement above.

[21] Timothy Earle (Rice: 1981: 231) was the first to explicitly, though briefly, address the concept of "attached" and "independent" specialists in his response to Prudence Rice's 1981 proposal of a trial methodology. Subsequent literature on the subject has further refined the implications connected with such a division (see Costin 1991, 2001: 297-301; Inomata 2001; Pool and Bey 2007: 7, 10, 20-21; Rice 1987: 186).

produce objects based on the needs of the larger community (or family unit) (Costin 2001: 298-299). Thus, a system of direct patron-client relationships characterizes attached production, while market demand in a larger sense affects independent manufacturing patterns. As Costin (2001: 298) has recently pointed out, "the central concern in attached forms of production is control and the desire of elites/institutions to determine access to particular classes of goods." In contrast, independent specialists make their own decisions regarding production systems, labor organization, and the dissemination of the resulting product, as well as its appearance. Direct control is not necessarily exerted over all aspects of craft production in the case of attached specialists, however (Costin 2001: 289). Furthermore, regardless of the specific pressures exerted on individual creators, "attached artisans produce goods with extrinsic, extra-utilitarian functions that can be exploited only by a subset of the population. Fundamentally, attached forms of production function to uphold or enhance one social groups' unequal access to resources, labor, and/or wealth" (Costin 2001: 298).

Literate elites related by blood to the governing lord probably composed the group of ceramicists responsible for creating Chocholá vessels in the Oxkintok area.[22] Pottery production was almost certainly kin-based in nature and organized in household settings.[23] Unfortunately, the exact location of pottery manufacture in Oxkintok or its environs remains unclear. Variability in the end product was acceptable but elites evidently exerted internal control, resulting in the repetition of certain iconographic

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[22] Consider the young elite male who was buried with Chocholá style vessels and a bone that named the Oxkintok lord, **OHL-si-?-TOK'**. This person may have been part of the potting community at Oxkintok because carved bone implements (fig. 6) were found in his burial goods. These objects have been variously interpreted as artistic tools (Schmidt [2004: 32] suggested that long-decayed brushes would have originally been tied around the ends), clothing or hair pins (Taschek 1994: 110-111, 128-129, figs. 31b, 42e) or weaving pins (Karl Taube 2010, pers. comm.) (see also Chapter 2).

[23] Arnold (2008: 315), in examining modern Maya pottery production in Ticul, has tried to codify and quantify the changes to that production model inspired by tourist demand. His findings indicate that, "although some aspects of modern pottery production are not directly applicable to the past, it appears that the processes involved in the acquisition of household personnel, the perpetuation of the craft, and the residence locations of potters are not among them" (see also Inomata 2001).

tropes (e.g. the young lord in an underworldly setting, see Chapter 4). In this sense, the loosely attached artists who created Chocholá vessels may be an example of a more refined aspect of manufacture, namely embedded production, defined by Kenneth Ames (1995) as specifically associated with high class creators and elite patrons/consumers.[24]

In addition to the control exerted by the patron, what kinds of interchanges did the potter, be he embedded or attached, participate in? Terms like workshop, workgroup and/or school have been used to describe stylistically similar patterns of creation (see Costin 2001: 296-297; Inomata 2001: 330; Reents-Budet 1994; Reents-Budet et al. 2000). The identification of such groups relies on the recognition of the physical locations of pottery manufacture, however: "individual and workshop production are distinguished by the size of the facility" (Costin 2001: 296). Chocholá production was stylistically standardized enough to suggest the existence of workshops and Chocholá potters certainly interacted with one another during the creative process, as the similarity between vessels made by different hands demonstrates (e.g. Chapter 5). Instead of naming specific workshops and/or schools, I choose to refer to more general categories of exchange like a closely-knit group of ceramicists, for example, since the exact location of pottery manufacture in Oxkintok and its surroundings cannot be examined from an archaeological perspective at this time. Irregardless of its compositional nature, however, the Oxkintok potting community had access to good clay sources located in caves very close to the center of the site (Mercer 1975: 45-57, 21-31).[25] These caverns were considered special spaces, as indicated by the ritual activity that occurred there anciently, residues of which can still be seen today (like ancient pottery fragments, early

[24] As Costin (2001: 300-301) pointed out, however, "the distinction [between non-kin, non-embedded production units and kin-based, embedded manufacturing systems] may not have been so clear cut in non-Western, preindustrial societies; drawing a marked distinction between embedded and attached production may obscure important ideologies about the social relations of production."

[25] Modern potters still demonstrate an interest in using sources according to "tradition" and "a sense of place" (Arnold 2008: 324-325).

petroglyphs and flint offerings).[26] As future excavations take place in Oxkintok and at other sites associated with Chocholá production, the exact composition of artisan groups should be revisited.

Scale is another important factor affecting ceramic production. While certainly imprecise, my consideration of scale here relates to Costin's (2001), Pool's (1992) and Pool and Bey's (2007) discussions of the term (see also Rice 1987: 171-172, 180-181). From a historiographic perspective, Pool and Bey (2007: 9) noted,

> Whereas Costin originally defined scale in terms of the number of individuals in a production unit and the principles by which labor is recruited (see Costin 2001: 291), Pool's usage referred to gross levels of inputs and outputs. Thus, for Pool, 'large-scale production' implies the consumption of large amounts of energy, capital, or materials by potters to produce many vessels (1992: 278). He also distinguished scale of production from the physical 'size of the production entity,' that is, its spatial extent.

I first developed a sense of scale based on the sheer number of pots that my analysis connected with an Oxkintok production locus. In this way, I found that the Oxkintok area was a "large-scale producer" as defined by Pool (1992) and further restricted to only

[26] Given their moist atmosphere, caves could also have been used to store some pottery still in the process of being worked (Karl Taube 2010, pers. comm.). Such use patterns are not likely to leave any archaeological traces (and thus present an untestable scenario), but the connection between artists and supernaturals (see Reents-Budet 1998: 76-77) might have further encouraged the use of such locations. Most likely, however, pottery producers focused most of their activities in their corresponding households (as in ancient Veracruz, e.g. Pool 2003: especially 58, 67). Indeed, the nature of ceramic production requires that individual vessels receive constant attention from the beginning of the process to the end. Potters needed to continually monitor the vessel in order to maintain a proper carving surface. Such artists would use different materials (i.e. cloth, leather, leaves and other organic items) with varying degrees of wetness, to wrap the vessel. They would need to check the wrappings to ensure the desired result—a surface wet enough for carving but not so wet that the subtractive process of pressing into the clay wall deformed the vessel shape (Dorie Reents-Budet 2010, pers. comm.). The need to monitor unfinished pieces implies that most makers commonly stored uncompleted vessels near their domestic units (Dorie Reents-Budet 2010, pers. comm.; this also supports the idea that the person who created the vessel was responsible for its carving).

include outputs (as opposed to inputs and outputs) by Pool and Bey (2007: 9).[27] I then further analyzed and compared individual pieces and was able to identify the work of multiple hands connected with an Oxkintok locus of manufacture, which in turn led to an understanding of scale in the way Costin (2001) defined it, tied, in this case, to a significant number of master potters.

While it is impossible to provide a more precise examination of scale in the Oxkintok potting community at this time, several conclusions arise from analyzing the Chocholá evidence that can now be connected with that production center (see Chapters 3-6). First, several artists created multiple ceramics in the style. Second, not all pieces coming out of the Oxkintok region can be directly linked to these specific hands. Third, several different variations of the style were developed in area. Fourth, additional stylistic variation, combined with archaeological and general provenience indicates that potters in other northern centers also made variations of the style. These observations imply that a large group of potters worked in and around Oxkintok at the time of Chocholá production.

This complements the political panorama; Oxkintok was a major center in the Puuc hills region of northern Yucatán during the Late Classic and exerted control over its immediate surroundings. The smaller size of other sites in the region and the network of *sacbes* (roads) that converged at Oxkintok as well as the fact that this center has been identified as a Rank 1 site (Varela Torrecilla 1998: 31), according to the hierarchies developed by Nicholas Dunning and Jeff Karl Kowalski (1994: 77), supports such assumptions. The *sacbes* likely facilitated the dissemination of a fragile, elite commodity as a physical demonstration of the existing power structure, alliances and unequal

[27] I use the phrase 'large-scale' here in a relative sense. Oxkintok-area potters created a significant number of Chocholá vessels: ten vessels can be connected with the site based on archaeological provenience and the use of Oxkintok toponyms/names while stylistic comparisons suggest further links to between fourteen and twenty five vessels, bringing the total to somewhere between twenty five and thirty five vessels, approximately 20% to 28% of the current corpus. The Oxkintok level of Chocholá production can thus be called 'large-scale' because it seems to far surpass any Chocholá production at other sites. The creation of luxury wares was certainly not 'large-scale' in relation to other, more utilitarian pottery types, however.

relationships.[28] In participating in this sociopolitical and economic exchange, sites both close to and relatively distant from the major locus of production received and/or made Chocholá style pots.

Through the foregoing consideration of different aspects of pottery economics, our understanding of the basic nature and function of the Chocholá style has developed greater specificity and goes beyond simply noting its carved surface and luxury status. The exact nature of distribution along both geographic and temporal lines can yield further insights regarding sociopolitical, economic and religious exchange and ceramic change. Chronological and spatial patterns of dissemination benefit from the further investigation they receive in Chapters 6 and 7. Likewise, the iconographic and hieroglyphic programs provide a wealth of interpretive data particularly cogent in discussing the specific social contexts resulting in Chocholá manufacture and dissemination (Chapters 4, 5). While an examination of distribution patterns is fairly straightforward and influenced by the precepts laid out above, many different avenues exist for the exploration of iconographic and epigraphic analysis. Indeed, the choice of particular grouping techniques, for example, certainly reflects the individual scholar's interests and may skew the resulting interpretation. For this reason, I would like to spend a few moments considering various approaches to studying imagery and text.

### *Iconographic Approaches: History vs. Myth*

Several different trends have characterized recent studies of iconographic forms on Maya vases. I will discuss two major analytic approaches that have been applied, with subsequent modification, to the Chocholá style. In the 1970s, Michael Coe proposed that Maya elite ceramics were funerary in nature. Accordingly, in Coe's eyes, vessel imagery focused entirely on mythological events often linked directly with the post-conquest book

[28] Arnold (2008: 310) has remarked on the use of roads for the transport of pottery in both ancient and modern times.

of the Quiche, the *Popol Vuh*. In Coe's own words (1973: 11), "This is the realm of the dead, inhabited by a host of macabre gods and monstrous creatures. There is nothing unusual about this conclusion, for after all the overwhelming majority of Maya pictorial pottery was, in fact, found in tombs and graves and must have had a funerary function." Even when he acknowledged that the participants were historical individuals, he connected them with the underworld. In considering the imagery on a Chamá style example, Coe (1973: 13) stated, "Would this not then indicate that the vase depicts a ruler and his court as if projected into the world of the dead? I think the same interpretation can be placed on all palace scenes." Indeed, Coe (1973: 22) originally saw ceramic imagery (and text, see below) as one part of a larger representational system wherein depictions of funerary processes focused on underworld characters and occurrences were restricted to pottery, historical events to stelae and ritual and calendrical information to codices.

In the early 1980s, Francis Robicsek and Donald Hales expanded on Coe's idea that many of the characters were mythological in nature. These authors seem to have been directly inspired by Coe's (1973: 22) concluding comments:

> There is enough congruence in this material to suggest that the artist who was responsible for painting funerary vases (presumably immediately following the decease of the person for whose grave they were intended) was drawing upon an already existing corpus of written and painted material in codex form. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that there was a real Book of the Dead for the Classic Maya, akin to the Book of the Dead of the ancient Egyptians, which contained ritual texts and pictures describing the long and terrifying journey of the dead man's soul to its final resting place.

Even though they questioned the applicability of the *Popol Vuh* to all Maya ceramic imagery, Robicsek and Hales (1981: 7-8) significantly titled their volume *The Maya Book of the Dead*. In this text, they initiated a system of analysis that focused on ceramic vessels as precursors to, and three-dimensional versions of, the painted codices known from the Postclassic: "some of these vases—those depicting mythological scenes—were not only painted in codex style by codex painters but *truly represent pages of ceramic codices in continuity*" (Robicsek and Hales 1981: xxi, emphasis in original).

Both approaches have been highly influential in Maya studies. In fact, the two scholars to consider Chocholá iconography in any depth after Coe's (1973) landmark publication allude either directly or indirectly to one or both approaches. Carolyn Tate (1985: 129), for example, explicitly followed Robicsek and Hales' (1981) lead when she suggested that particular Chocholá entities related to a larger narrative sequence: "Each of these characters appear in combination with one or more of the others in Chocholá style vessels, indicating that, as Robicsek and Hales suggest, these characters all play a specific role in a long-lost Maya myth." She also drew upon the approach initiated by Coe, as when, in considering Chocholá dedicatory formula, she stated, "It generally begins with a Moon Sign (T13.682:18), and a winged quincunx (T61.77:585) acts as a verb, probably referring to the journey of a deceased individual to the Maya Underworld (Coe 1973: 22)" (Tate 1985: 124). While she used the *Popol Vuh* as an explanatory source and was evidently heavily influenced by both schools of thought, Tate (1985: especially 127, 130) did not try to interpret historic individuals, such as the ballplayers frequently found in Chocholá scenes, as dead individuals in an underworldly setting.

Traci Ardren adopted Coe's approach in a more diffused manner. She, like Coe, clearly viewed Chocholá vessels "as elite ceremonial or funerary wares," that could answer "timely questions about Maya funerary mythology" (Ardren 1996: 237, 244). Ardren (1996: 242) did not explicitly examine Chocholá scenes as examples of such a mythological narrative, however, except when she suggested that the young lords ubiquitous to the style might not act as "specific representations of rulers, but [as] mythical or heroic male[s] from Maya mythology."

Our current understanding of Maya iconography, combined with a greatly enlarged corpus of images derived both from ceramic and monumental art forms, has led most scholars to rigidly differentiate between historical individuals appearing in concrete settings (like palaces) and supernatural creatures found in otherworldly locations (see Reents-Budet 1994). Indeed, in the decades following Coe's and Robicsek and Hales' publications, more examples became available, which, combined with advances in hieroglyphic decipherment, led to the strictly historical interpretation of ceramic imagery.

Thus, Coe's original interpretive model, in which all ceramic iconography related to death and the underworld, has fallen by the wayside, even though his individual iconographic interpretations remain pertinent and insightful. Additionally, while individual pots certainly illustrate parts of larger stories, no single mythic precedent that connects the various representations can be identified. Thus, while Robicsek and Hales made a major contribution to the field, especially through the inclusion of a number of previously unpublished vessels, their codex interpretations now seem to be but a short-lived scholarly vogue. In discussing the mythic representation of the so-called Bearded Dragon on a polychrome vessel, for example, they link the speared serpentine form to the God L narrative they identified in a handful of Codex Style pots (Robicsek and Hales 1981: 107-113, see especially fig. 13). This character appears in the Chocholá corpus and the scenes that include the spearing of the watery being certainly depict one part of a much larger mythic narrative, as Tate (1985: 126-127) acknowledged. It cannot now be connected with an overarching meta-narrative linking all ceramic imagery to a now lost mythic story, however.

Given that the specifics associated with these two basic interpretive models can no longer be supported, how does one approach iconographic interpretation? Certainly one can begin by identifying individual image forms and associated symbolism in a manner not so different from that presented by Erwin Panofsky (1955a) in his iconology-iconography discussion. While the overarching connections that Coe and Robicsek and Hales suggested across all ancient Maya vessels certainly do not hold true, aspects of each approach can be modified and manipulated in relation to the data at hand. Individual examinations of different bodies of ceramic material will certainly require different approaches, but we should be careful not to throw the baby out with the bathwater, so to speak, and completely reject the interpretive methods introduced by Coe and Robicsek and Hales. While young lords do appear in palace settings in the Chocholá corpus and cannot be "projected into the world of the dead," other youthful portraits of historical individuals appear in underwater settings, as Coe (1973: 16) recognized. In this particular case, then, Coe's basic idea that elites were shown in connection with

underworldly settings often remains valid, as do both Coe's and Robicsek and Hales' efforts to examine imagery from a narrative perspective. The specifics, however, require further fine-tuning. Chocholá iconography records/reifies the 'truth' of the depicted event and blurs the standard, modern distinction between mythic spaces and those connected with reality. The youthful males portrayed in watery contexts almost certainly cannot be connected with the death of the individuals pictured but rather act as a legitimizing program of inter-spatial communication, just as some pots imply a narrative moment while not participating in an overarching meta-narrative (Chapter 4).

I follow a pattern of image analysis that first carefully separates historical individuals from scenes that clearly portray only mythological entities and/or deities. This analytic model encourages a multi-dimensional system of grouping where like is grouped with like based on an internal hierarchy of forms (the figure that receives the most emphasis in any particular scene typically dictates which group or set of groups the vessel may be connected with) and an increasingly specific consideration of referents. As categories are developed and modified, regrouping, or at least the awareness and consideration of alternate assemblage patterns suggests particular sets as more or less successful/meaningful. Once established, such clusters can be interpreted both individually and in relation to one another. In a cohesive, temporally and geographically constrained corpus like the Chocholá style, for example, one would expect an increased degree of connection across individual pieces, not necessarily iconographically, although this certainly occurs, but rather at a conceptual level. What themes or tropes occur repeatedly and why? Thus, while I modify Coe's and Robicsek and Hales' methods for my own purposes here, my overarching approach focuses on elucidating the kinds of messages such vessels sent in their function as cultural capital.[29]

[29] See Inomata (2001: 332) for the use of this term.

*Epigraphic Approaches*

Michael Coe (1999) has done an excellent job of examining the history of epigraphic advances and I will not replicate his work here. A few observations regarding ceramic dedicatory formulae warrant consideration, however. In the same publication in which he suggested that ceramic imagery represented mythological events related to death, Coe revolutionized the way text strings were seen. He contradicted J.E.S. Thompson (who believed that illiterate ceramicists simply copied hieroglyphic forms onto their wares; 1950: 27) by expanding on the pattern Longyear (1952: 60-66) had recognized and suggesting that such inscriptions were inherently functional (i.e. readable). As Coe (1973: 22) stated,

> I cannot prove it, but in my own opinion the Primary Standard sequence is the glyphic form of a long hymn which could have been sung over the dead or dying person, describing the descent of the Hero Twins to the Underworld, the various sinister gods and perils which they (and the deceased's soul) might encounter there, and perhaps ending with a reference to the Twins' apotheosis and the possibility of the same event for the soul of the person for whom the vase was painted. There is considerable evidence that, at the end of such a text, the deceased's name, titles, affiliation, and age at death could be spelled out.

Subsequently, scholars like Stephen Houston, Karl Taube and David Stuart have rectified some erroneous assumptions. Houston and Taube (1987) were the first to identify "name-tagging"—a term coined by Peter Mathews (1979) in order to describe the self-referential text found on an earspool—in the hieroglyphic sequences found on Maya pots. In doing so, they emphasized the classificatory nature of such texts as well as the ritual use of the associated objects (Houston and Taube 1987: 40). Stuart (1989: 154, 2005b: 114) built upon Houston and Taube's work by subsequently arguing for the now widely held understanding that such inscriptions were dedicatory in nature (requiring new terminology—the dedicatory formula): "it is, primarily, a descriptive 'tag' for vessels of various types. The most fundamental tag simply names the owner of a given vessel." Lengthier variations can include information regarding content and type of surface modification.

At the same time that Stuart was drafting his article, Nikolai Grube (1990) was in the process of writing a specific consideration of Chocholá style dedicatory formulae, published the following year in the same series. After this base line had been established, various scholars have used Chocholá texts to address a multiplicity of issues ranging from the identification of a new category of vessel to an investigation of sociopolitical relationships implied by the use of certain nominal forms and titles (see Boot 1997a, 1997b; García Campillo 1992; Green 1997; Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005). As in my iconographic approach, I employ an epigraphic methodology that first identifies the component pieces of the Chocholá dedicatory formula. I then examine consistencies as well as variation across vessels in order to arrive at a focused understanding of the Chocholá style as a sociopolitical, economic and religious tool manipulated by the elite population to solidify status and inter- and intra-regional connections.

## *Maya Ceramic Production: Case Studies*

I would now like to briefly consider analogues from elsewhere in the Maya world as a way of concluding my introduction to the Chocholá style. The case studies I present below use material analysis (like neutron activation) that is outside the scope of the present work. Future research into the style will certainly benefit from the application of these kinds of methods. While each group of authors applies methodological and theoretical frameworks to the study of ancient Maya ceramics by incorporating such data, both approach their respective bodies of material with similar overarching goals in mind. In each case, the scholars focused on the sociopolitical and economic implications of pottery manufacture.

Foias and Bishop (2007: 214), for example, followed earlier scholars (e.g. Brumfiel and Earle 1987; McAnany 1993; Potter and King 1995) in separating ancient

Maya general and prestige economies. The first concerns 'utilitarian' objects.[30] The second has been connected with luxury items in their exclusive function as a way of solidifying alliances at various levels of inter- and intra-site interaction as well as marking the social status of individual owners (Foias and Bishop 2007: 214; see also Ball and Taschek 1992: 17). In Foias and Bishop's (2007: 233-234) analysis of Petexbatun pottery, both type-variety classification and instrumental neutron activation analysis suggests that elites oversaw the prestige economy to some extent even though they did not apparently manage the general economy.[31] Elites particularly seemed to control the intra-regional importation of luxury wares like polychromes (Foias and Bishop 2007: 227, 233-234). This picture of ceramic production has an analogue in the northern Yucatán Peninsula. While I do not focus on 'utilitarian' wares, I argue that Chocholá style ceramics were created at the behest of at least one lord at Oxkintok, who disseminated them throughout the area at both the inter- and intra-site levels. Certainly possession of such an elaborately carved vessel type spoke to particular owners' status and the style's distribution also indicates the development of a far-flung system of political connections, as I demonstrate (Chapter 6).

Foias and Bishop (2007: 219-220) also found a high degree of regionalization and localization in the Petexbatun manufacture of luxury wares. Accordingly, far-reaching, widespread elite control over pottery production is unlikely in their eyes (Foias and Bishop 2007: 220). I suggest that the Chocholá system of production similarly developed a regionalized, localized component.[32] The evidence indicates that Oxkintok controlled

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[30] I use the term 'utilitarian' provisionally in this case, please see my comments regarding terminology in footnote 2.

[31] As Rice (1987: 203-204) has noted,

> so-called elite wares—products with high value, special function, low consumption, or restricted distribution—may participate in all spheres of economic activity (production, distribution, and use) in a very different way than utilitarian wares (those with low value, high consumption, and wide circulation).

[32] By the Early Classic, northern ceramic production seems to have been localized in a larger sense as well, with "at least five regional ceramic spheres" identifiable in the archaeological record, including "one in the greater Puuc area, one centered around

the manufacture of a 'core' subset that codifies the Chocholá style as I define it here (Chapter 3). Further data from locations as diverse as Jaina to the west, Tiho to the northeast and Ticul to the south, however, indicates that related ceramics were created in these and other areas (Chapter 6). While stylistically distinct enough to support the idea of multiple centers of production, I argue that pots from outside the immediate Oxkintok zone share a 'family resemblance' linking them to the style as a whole (see Chapter 3). I suggest that they were created in dialogue with the core stylistic grouping and out of the desire to partake of a luxury ware tradition then coalescing in the Chocholá style. In a few cases, additional information indicates that the potters in regional centers were likely directly exposed to Oxkintok pots.

Foias and Bishop (2007: 230) tend to emphasize the regionalization of pottery production in Guatemala, while I first focus on the large number of indicators that connect Chocholá production with a single site. Foias and Bishop's (2007) findings in the Petexbatun region corroborate this pattern of northern production although the level of emphasis varies. In reiterating localized production evidence, they also note that some ceramic types can be clearly connected with particular locations and probably even with elite patronage (Foias and Bishop 2007: 230). Thus, Foias and Bishop (2007), in considering many different kinds of vessels from diverse locations, conclude that pottery production was generally diffused throughout the Petexbatun region, an area that also contained pockets of prestige economies.

From an albeit much more individualized perspective focusing on Chocholá ceramics, I argue that a specific set of northern elites living in the Oxkintok area consciously manipulated a particular ceramic style that was subsequently copied, modified and/or appropriated at local production levels. Therefore, it would seem that northern elites more actively managed the production of fine wares. These findings may shed light on why the information currently available for the north seems to indicate a slightly different trajectory from that found in the south, or rather a slightly different

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Yaxuná, one centered on the Ek' Balam region, and one extending along the southern east coast" (Bey 2006: 35).

placement of emphasis on prestige economies. While there are a number of distinct, powerful sites in the Petexbatun area in the 700-800 CE date range connected with Chocholá production, the hierarchical structure in the Yucatán Peninsula seems to have been more focused, with Oxkintok acting as one of the major, centralized powers in the region. This may explain why, although diverse and regionalized, the major creation and manufacture of the Chocholá style can still be connected with a single site—Oxkintok, as I argue. Foias and Bishop's (2007: 230) findings that "the most intense level of exchange [i.e. the clearest case of an elite-controlled prestige economy] is between Aguateca and Dos Pilas, the twin capitals" support such a suggestion.[33] Bringing more northern ceramic groups into the study would, of course, further solidify this perspective, but such an extensive body of work is outside the scope of the present work. In any case, the Puuc area seems to provide a parallel to Petexbatun patterns of ceramic production and distribution, at least at the level associated with the manufacture of luxury wares. As the corpus of pottery from the Oxkintok region grows and as scholars conduct further chemical analysis, the similarities between the two regions can be compared further (based on its role in the sociopolitical environment of Late Classic Yucatán, for example, Oxkintok should contain a number of ceramic imports).[34]

Like Foias and Bishop, Reents-Budet (et al. 2000) and colleagues employ a conjunctive approach in their examination of Buenavista del Cayo ceramics that relies on several different avenues of investigation. They also reached similar conclusions, namely that one center was responsible for producing vessels of a certain kind, while other centers in the surrounding regions adopted and appropriated these forms. Thus, Reents-Budet (et al. 2000) and colleagues' findings indicate that one site produced a highly refined core stylistic grouping while a broader ceramic perspective also demonstrates that regionalization dictated pottery manufacture.

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[33] Foias and Bishop (2007: 230) note that other processes—periodic elite relocation, tribute, etc.—might explain this pattern of seeming exchange.

[34] I would like to thank Dorie Reents-Budet (2010, pers. comm.) for pointing out the possibility of imports to me. See Varela Torrecilla (1989: 81, 1990: 119-121, 1992: 141) for a brief discussion of imports and stylistic correspondences between the Middle and Late Classic ceramics of Oxkintok and east Yucatán as well as the Petén.

Both scholarly groups employ similar approaches, yielding similar results. Unlike Foias and Bishop, Reents-Budet (et al. 2000: especially 100, 107) and colleagues emphasize style as an important analytic tool. Indeed, they suggest that a multiplicity of variations in appearance and form reflect multiple centers of production, a standpoint that their evidence supports and that frames my own approach to the Chocholá material. The authors also incorporate a discussion of iconography, albeit brief (Reents-Budet et al. 2000: 117):

> The imagery includes palace scenes replete with polychrome vessels depicted in use, renderings of tribute payment, ritual-dance performances, religious rites, and representations of the more central and esoteric aspects of Maya religious mythology. Today, this painted imagery is an exceptionally rich source of Classic Maya recountings of their society, political history, and religious ideology.

While they do not explore such implications in relation to the Buenavista material, it is exactly this kind of ideologically influenced methodology that guides my own approach to the Chocholá corpus (Chapters 4, 6).

Reents-Budet and her co-authors also explore ceramic expression through time. As they state, "…these sherds represent the output of a single polychrome-pottery workshop whose production spanned two archaeological time periods yet whose potters retained the same paste recipe and maintained a degree of stylistic coherency through time" (Reents-Budet et al. 2000: 113).[35] The implication of a temporal dimension is critical in this case, and serves to solidify two major components found in my own work. First, ceramic production at the highest of levels tended to be conservative, as I

[35] More recently, Looper, Reents-Budet and Bishop (2009) have identified related, yet distinct, iconographic programs in vessels from two different areas. The particularity of such choice likely relates to the individual ideological contexts within which the ceramics were created. Furthermore, the Ik' style pottery Looper, Reents-Budet and Bishop (2009: 132-149) consider provides a clear analogue to Chocholá systems of manufacture as they were produced under two rulers, in succession, in addition to presenting a focused, cohesive iconographic set within the larger dancing trope. As Reents-Budet (2010, pers. comm.) has indicated, she continues to explore the specifics of such identity formulation (why did certain artists choose certain forms over others, for example, and why would some locations provide evidence for an overarching drinking vessel type spanning two different archaeological periods while other areas do not?).

mentioned above. Second, one would expect, as a corollary, that when an even deeper timeframe is considered, certain iconographic and/or formal attributes connected with a particular corpus can be identified in both earlier and later examples. Indeed, in contextualizing the Chocholá style, I find that particular formal elements (like the calabash shape, for instance) repeat in both the periods preceding and following Chocholá production (Chapter 7). As Reents-Budet and her colleagues, and Arnold (2008) in another context, have suggested, conservatism constrains the range of acceptable variations; such restriction almost certainly resides at an ideological level.

Ultimately, these authors suggest that elite workshops were responsible for the creation of luxury commodities like the vessels under consideration (Reents-Budet et al. 2000). They combine an analysis of architectural forms (elite residences, etc.) with depositional information and in doing so, arrive at the following conclusion, "We suggest that…this production took place in what might be called a palace-workshop environment. This ascription implies social and economic as well as spatial connections with an elite residential compound, in this instance within what was probably the residential compound of the ruling family of Buenavista" (Reents-Budet et al. 2000: 113). The consistency these scholars identify in the ceramic record, combined with depositional and architectural information, supports their conclusions.

In the Chocholá corpus, homogeneity is certainly visible within a specific core subset of the style and can be linked with Oxkintok (Chapter 6). Unfortunately, however, production units cannot be identified at this time in the archaeological record and the second best avenue of investigation, that used by Reents-Budet and colleagues, is also unavailable given the fact that depositional information is known for only a handful of Chocholá pieces at Oxkintok. Thus, while I am convinced that a cohesive potting community (or communities) in the area created Chocholá style objects, I resist the temptation of identifying a workshop at this time. It is certainly possible, for instance, that several workshops engaged in creating Chocholá vessels existed in the immediate Oxkintok region. Despite the fact that I do not identify 'workshops,' I would like to acknowledge assemblages composed of visually similar examples. For this reason, I

identify and discuss potting groups as collections of like-minded individuals who, while working under a patronage system, created vessels in dialogue with other members from their group (and those surrounding them). As the Chocholá corpus is subjected to more chemical analysis, we may be able to further refine our ideas concerning potting communities and the terms we use to describe them, based on the degree to which resources and techniques are shared.[36] I avoid calling such clusters workshops at this point, given the uncertainty that surrounds their exact location, composition and the mechanics of production they employed.

### *Conclusion*

New data and new ways of looking make possible the understanding of the Chocholá style presented above. This introduction, as well as the methodological frameworks I have included, inform my approach to the corpus. In what follows, I more closely examine specific aspects of Chocholá production. I first conduct an in-depth review of scholarly treatments of the style in Chapter 2. I then define the style by recognizing the repetitive nature of certain technical, formal, iconographic and textual choices in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, I focus on selective processes as they appear in iconographic patterns and link certain vessels to individual producers. I consider the idiosyncratic nature of Chocholá textual inclusions and further identify scribal hands responsible for multiple vessels in Chapter 5. In Chapter 6, I combine these different approaches and place Chocholá vessels in the temporal and geographic context of the late northern sociopolitical and economic sphere. The evidence I present indicates that a significant sub-selection of stylistic attributes used to define the Chocholá corpus coincides with the identification of an Oxkintok locus of production associated with multiple master potters. I also discuss Chocholá production at other sites, based on the

[36] Even in the case where Neutron Activation Analysis provides clear parallels between pieces, the analyst may still choose to avoid the term workshop, however, as the same criticism I introduced above applies.

identification of stylistic variants combined with general provenience and archaeological data as well as comparisons between monumental artistic and scribal pieces and Chocholá vessels. I conclude my examination of the choices made by ancient potters and their patrons by contextualizing the style temporally in my seventh and last chapter. I also consider the larger ideological import of the style as a whole in relation to the particular set of concerns facing Puuc region elites during the Late Classic period.

## Chapter 2
## Understanding the Chocholá Style's Place in Maya Scholarship

### *Introduction*

Academics began publishing deeply carved ceramics in the Chocholá style at the very inception of Maya studies. Indeed, beginning in the 1840s, a number of scholars conducted insightful examinations of the style. It was not until 1973, however, that Michael Coe first identified these carved vessels as a cohesive ceramic unit. Subsequent accounts by Carolyn Tate (1985) and Traci Ardren (1996) have resulted in a better understanding of the imagery found in the Chocholá corpus, while a host of epigraphers, including Nikolai Grube (1990) and José Miguel García Campillo (1992), have deciphered much of the dedicatory formula.

In contrast to the careful, if brief investigations conducted by Coe, Tate, Ardren, Grube, García Campillo and others, in general accounts such pots are often presented in isolation and continue to go unrecognized. The style itself remains only partially defined and many aspects of the textual inclusions, iconography and vessel form lack the kind of in-depth analysis that characterizes scholarly interest in other aspects of ancient Maya material culture. In fact, investigators only recently started examining the wealth of information that the Chocholá style provides regarding elite production and interaction in the northern Maya area. The lack of analysis stems in part from a contextual deficiency; until recently such pots could only be connected with general context at best since most were looted. While the missing archaeological anchors leave much to be desired, general context can still yield important information. Furthermore, prior analysis of such pieces, while scanty, provides a good starting point for understanding the Chocholá style. Now too, with continued archaeological excavations in the north, this pottery has specific depositional information for the first time. Thus, before Chocholá ceramics can be fully defined as a cohesive style and their participation in elite networks investigated, the current available data must be examined.

*Literature Review*

In the first half of the nineteenth century, two explorers by the names of John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood traveled through the Yucatán Peninsula studying and documenting ancient Maya sites. Stephens subsequently published Catherwood's images alongside his own account of their experiences in *Incidents of Travel in Yucatán* in 1843. According to Stephens (1843: 275), he and Catherwood were shown a deeply carved pot in Ticul, a modern village in the Puuc hills of the Yucatán Peninsula (fig. 7). Reportedly, locals found the vessel during excavations at the nearby hacienda of San Francisco, which Stephens (1843: 272-274) suggested was the original, pre-conquest center from which the modern town of Ticul gets its name. In Stephens' (1843: 274-276, emphasis in original) own words,

> In the excavations constantly going on, objects of interest were from time to time discovered, one of which, a vase, was…loaned to us to make a drawing of…. The engraving below [fig. 7] represents two sides of the vase; on one side is a border of hieroglyphics, with sunken lines running to the bottom, and on the other, the reader will observe that the face portrayed bears a strong resemblance to those of the sculptured and stuccoed figures at Palenque: the headdress, too, is a plume of feathers, and the hand is held out in the same stiff position. The vase is four and a half inches high, and five inches in diameter.[37]

Stephens (1843: 276) was so struck by the pot's quality that he even decided to do some brief digging of his own in the area, although he did not encounter any similar specimens.

In addition to the invaluable information Stephens' (1843) eyewitness account and Catherwood's illustrations provided regarding many sites in the Maya region, his discussion of this piece is significant for several reasons. He seems to have been the first to discuss and illustrate any examples of ancient Maya pottery (Miller 1989b: 128) and

[37] In discussing the various authors who have mentioned the Chocholá style I do not intend to provide in depth summaries of each individual work. When appropriate, I will return to various authors' work as I purse detailed analyses of particular iconographic, epigraphic and/or contextual aspects in the chapters that follow. Here, rather than simply recapping the various arguments, I identify the major contributions each made in understanding the Chocholá style in addition to placing the various texts in historiographic context.

the vessel he celebrated in the above description is now widely recognized as representative of the Chocholá style (see Ardren 1996; Tate 1985). Thus, Chocholá vases were among the first Maya ceramics to be published, even though they were not known by that name until much later. Stephens (1843: 274-276) also identified several salient characteristics. In addition to recording the piece's dimensions, he was the first to link the deeply carved surfaces of such vessels with the sculptural forms found in conjunction with monumental architecture (Stephens 1843: 275). He also recognized the elevated place such pottery would have held anciently when he talked of the "admirable workmanship" as comparable to ceramic production in Spain (Stephens 1843: 276).

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Herbert J. Spinden (1913: figs. 185-187), published several deeply carved wares in his classic work, *A Study of Maya Art*.[38] As with Stephens before him, Spinden tended to focus on northern ceramics because early travelers found the Yucatán Peninsula most accessible and the population sizes resulted in more regular finds (Miller 1989b: 131). As an early Mayanist art historian, however, Spinden (1913) emphasized iconographic analysis. He spent a considerable amount of time on several ceramics of interest here (figs. 8, 9). Like Stephens (1843: 274-276), Spinden (1913: 135-136) acknowledged the depth of carving but he also introduced additional details and a level of analysis not found in Stephens' account:

> The carving [fig. 8] which is shown in the drawing represents a jaguar seated within a closed ring that is made up of what probably represents a water-lily stem coiled and knotted. The stem has two buds or flowers branching out at opposite sides of the circlet. The jaguar wears a cape tied round the shoulders and a loin cloth or skirt, as well as wrist and ankle bands, nose plugs and a headdress consisting of the well-known head of the Long-nosed God, in front of which is a small flower similar to the flowers at the side of the circlet. Seven oval glyphs are carved around the top of the bowl, two of these being shown in the drawing. The lines which delineate the coiled stem and the flowers are deeply incised.
>
> The jaguar figure is brought into relief through the simple device of cutting away the background. The details of the dress upon the body of the animal are incised in delicate lines and there is little or no modeling.

[38] Spinden first submitted an earlier version of this work in fulfilling his doctoral requirements in 1909; it was later published for the first time in 1913 and has enjoyed several reprints since then (Miller 1989b: 130-131).

> The spots of the jaguar are represented in black paint which has now largely disappeared. The sunken background is marked with incised cross lines which still retain traces of heavy red pigment. The carving or engraving of this remarkable piece appears to have been done when the clay had become fairly hard and after the surface had been polished, but before burning. It was certainly not modeled in soft clay.
>
> A somewhat similar style of decoration is shown in Figure 186 [fig. 9]. The bowl represented here is a fine piece of pottery coming from northern Yucatán.… In an elaborate scroll medallion appear the head and left arm of a man who holds diagonally a flexible object. The upper end of this object is a simplified face and the lower end is a flower, possibly a water lily. The composition is very pleasing to the eye. But certain features as, for instance, the headdress, have lost something of their original form, perhaps owing to constant repetition. As in the preceding vessel, the background is here cut away so that the figure stands out in flat relief. Other examples of engraved pottery are seen in Figs. 108, b and 187 [fig. 10].

While it is important that Spinden (1913) published additional ceramics in what we now recognize as the Chocholá style and further suggests the respective depositional locales of Peto, Calcetok and Jaina, his insightful analysis is perhaps most notable for the characteristics he mentioned. In contrast to Stephens, Spinden surveyed many different carved wares and identified several attributes specific to these pieces—the lack of modeling, the techniques of carving and surface decoration—including post firing painted additions—and the prevalent watery associations. He even loosely connected these vessels together in his examination although he did not go so far as to suggest that they participated in the same ceramic tradition (as evidenced by his figure 108b, which is in a completely different, though possibly related style from Chamá).

From these early publications, Chocholá ceramics have been loosely connected with several main areas—the hilly Puuc region of Yucatán (Calcehtok, Ticul), a slightly more southeastern area in Yucatán (Peto), and the western coast of Yucatán (Jaina) (fig. 5). While such vessels had yet to be grouped together in any systematic way, their inclusion attests to the recognition of their importance. Furthermore, these early scholars noted important attributes that we now know to function as diagnostic characteristics, setting such ceramic production apart from other elite types.

In 1927, soon after Spinden published his groundbreaking study, George Vaillant followed with his own doctoral dissertation. Just as influential in its own way, Vaillant's (1927) dissertation included a "Holmul sequence [that] has formed the basis for all subsequent ceramic sequences in the Maya area, even when not acknowledged by modern Maya archaeologists" (Miller 1989b: 132). Vaillant (1927) also developed a broad contextual analysis and began categorizing and cataloguing various wares from further afield.

In his massive survey of northern ceramic traditions, Vaillant (1927) compiled a vast array of types and varieties and in doing so illustrated many deeply carved ceramics of interest here (figs. 9, 11-14), including pieces that had not been published previously. Vaillant (1927: see captions for figs. 281-294, 295-304, 305-308, 309-315) connected these previously unknown examples with Uxmal as well as Ticul, Calcehtok and Jaina.[39] He also described them briefly but his main contribution in this case lies in the illustration of unknown pieces and the beginnings of a ceramic seriation. In his efforts to develop set ceramic sequences, Vaillant (1927: 346, see also fig. 313) identified many of the deeply carved wares as participating in the larger slateware tradition while a few were connected with a type he called "engraved red."[40]

The interest in categorizing Maya ceramics in broad terms continued and, as Gordon R. Willey and Jeremy Sabloff (1980: 83; see also Miller 1989b: 133) have indicated, American archaeology entered a "classificatory-Historical Period" characterized by an interest in chronology. In the years following Spinden's and Vaillant's investigations, George Brainerd began conducting systematic appraisals of

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[39] Vaillant (1927:78, 92, footnote 19, fig. 291) illustrates a vessel (fig. 9) first published by Spinden (1913: 186), whom Vaillant cited. Interestingly, Spinden linked the pot in question to Calcehtok, while Vaillant (1927: 84, 124, 335), presumably relying on the private owner's memory, recorded Sotuta as the original find location. Spinden's original identification seems the most likely not only because the piece may have changed hands, thus possibly obscuring its original provenience between the time Spinden saw it and Vaillant illustrated it. Calcehtok is also in the immediate Oxkintok area (fig. 1).

[40] It is interesting to note that the 'engraved red' ceramics are unusual examples of the carved tradition under consideration here and may reflect a regional development of the style.

northern Yucatecan ceramics. Brainerd's (1958: 234-235, fig. 61d) work resulted in the publication of his comprehensive study of the ceramics of Yucatán, including one of the vessels (fig. 8) originally illustrated by Spinden (1913: fig. 185). Brainerd (1958) also incorporated drawings of related ceramics, one of which was reportedly found in association with the large pyramid at Acanceh (Brainerd 1958: 234-235, fig. 61c). The first to attempt to develop a comprehensive type-variety classification specific to the ancient Yucatecan ceramic panorama, Brainerd, like Vaillant, suggested that these carved pieces were part of the fine slateware tradition associated with the Late Classic. He added that the Peto pot had been covered with slip prior to the carving of the image (Brainerd 1958: 234).[41]

Thus, not only were Chocholá examples among the first published ceramics, they were later included in the first attempt to classify carved traditions and refine the temporal continuum connected specifically with the north. Brainerd (1958: 244) also, like Stephens (1843), clearly identified such examples as elite commodities, even going so far as to call them the "highest development of the Florescent slateware tradition." In fact, Brainerd found the Peto piece so unusual that he could not place it within the typologies he had developed, beyond generally linking it to the slateware tradition. Uncertainty continues to be manifested in more recent approaches to the specific variation of carving styles. Indeed, Chocholá vessels are widely recognized as cutting across established varieties within the type-variety method of categorization (Ardren 2005, Benavides 2007 and Schmidt 2006, pers. comms.).[42]

While the individuals mentioned above have advanced Maya scholarship generally and the analysis of carved vessels in the north, specifically, it was not until 1973 that an explicit attempt was made to group deeply carved specimens like those first

[41] Brainerd (1958: 234) characterized both the Peto and Acanceh ceramics as examples of the medium slateware type but Brainerd's medium slateware category has since been combined with his thin slateware designation (Sylviane Boucher 2007, pers. comm.). Additionally, while he classed the Peto example as a medium slateware, in his later comments on the vessel, he stated that it was diagnostic of the thin slate tradition with the exception of the use of trickle paint (Brainerd 1958: 234).

[42] See also the different type classifications of the Chocholá style detailed below.

published by Stephens (1843), Spinden (1913), Vaillant (1927) and Brainerd (1958) together under a single umbrella style. This would be enough, by itself, to make Michael Coe's extraordinary 1973 publication of the Grolier Club exhibition, *The Maya Scribe and His World*, noteworthy. The exhibition also coincided with developments in the art market: other examples of the heavily incised ceramics first noted in earlier publications began flooding the art market in the 1960s and were offered by several different dealers (Michael Coe 2009, pers. comm.). With access to the largest corpus of such ceramics yet available, Coe (1973: 123-135) hypothesized the existence of a cohesive pottery set that he named the Chocholá style. Coe (2009, pers. comm.) based this title on the fact that the dealer who provided many of the pieces for the Grolier Club exhibition reported that they came from the Chocholá/Maxcanú area. What is more, the modern town of Chocholá acted as a major intermediary point between dealers and locals trafficking in objects looted from northern sites (David Stuart 2009, pers. comm.).

Coe (1973: cats. 53-65) illustrated the largest body of deeply carved and stylistically cohesive vessels in print to date.[43] Notably, one pot does not fit the loose Chocholá/Maxcanú provenance (fig. 15) and was supposedly found at Jaina, supporting the earlier evidence that suggested multiple areas of production. In his brief comments on the style in general, and regarding specific ceramics in particular, Coe developed a short definition (to be discussed further in Chapter 3) and linked such vessels to pottery production in the Puuc region during the Late Classic period. He even suggested that the Chocholá style was "an eighth-century phenomenon" (Coe 1973: 125).

Coe (1973) also made major contributions to the way Maya iconography and hieroglyphic sequences were analyzed. While many ceramics had been thought to present scenes from daily life, Coe (1973: e.g. 14-15) suggested that mythological entities

[43] Justin Kerr (1990), in association with Nikolai Grube's 1990 article on Chocholá style hieroglyphic sequences (see below), published approximately the same number of Chocholá ceramics as Coe had earlier. In Coe's compendium, however, a number of Chocholá vessels are included but not labeled as Chocholá; when these ceramics are considered as well, Coe's becomes the largest such printed corpus. Of course, a much larger number of Chocholá ceramics have been posted, in digital form, in Kerr's on-line ceramic database (www.mayavase.com/kerrmaya.html).

could appear as well. He was also the first to propose that ceramic texts, like those found in the monumental record, carried meaning and related to specific historical entities (Coe 1973: 18-22; also see Miller 1989b: 137). While his suggestion that these inscriptions functioned as part of funerary rituals can no longer be supported, the texts are clearly readable and contain important information referring to the way individual pots functioned. The inscriptions provide significant information regarding patrons, artists and receivers (see Grube 1990; Stuart 1989). As Mary Ellen Miller (1989b: 138) pointed out, even though early epigraphic advances destroyed the view of the Maya as a peaceful, stargazing culture and encouraged renewed analysis of monumental inscriptions and images, before Coe's (1973) work, the "study of…pots, if thought about at all, had lagged far behind." Furthermore, because he focused on ceramics that had largely been looted, Coe's (1973) catalogue encouraged lively debate amongst archaeologists and art historians regarding the use of such uncontextualized pieces in scholarly analysis (Miller 1989b: 137).

While Coe's (1973) catalogue was well-received, it was not until the turn of the decade that explicit interest in the style began to grow. Between 1978 and 1980 Michael Simmons compiled a report on the ceramics of Dzibilchaltún.[44] Simmons (1978-1980: 37) identified a Chocholá "molded" pot under the Dzibilchaltún Black Ware classification in Copo Complex, Copo Sphere, a part of the type-variety system established for the site. The ceramics were not illustrated, however, and apparently there was some doubt as to the identification, given that someone hand-corrected the entry, which initially read "Seungilli Molded" (Simmons 1978-1980: 37). Thus, it is not until the late twentieth century that Chocholá ceramics were published with provenience in an archaeological report and some question remains regarding the Chocholá identification given the lack of illustrative material.

According to Simmons' (1978-1980: 37-38) report, four sherds were found. Simmons (1978-1980: 38) stated that the sherds exhibited a hieroglyph "or other

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[44] This unpublished manuscript, *The Archaeological Ceramics of Dzibilchaltún, Yucatán, Mexico: The Ceramic Typology*, by Michael P. Simmons, can be found in the Biblioteca at the CRY—INAH (call number F1435.3 P8 S55).

conventionalized design impressed onto the surface of Dzityá Black vessels." The shapes of the four sherds implied that they came from jar (3) and "rounded sided bowl" (1) forms (Simmons 1978-1980: 38). This indicates that, at the very least, the sherds came from two different pots. Simmons (1978-1980: 38) concentrated on comparing the Dzibilchaltún pottery with Brainerd's (1958) ceramic characterization. Ultimately, Simmons noted that one of the Chocholá sherds indicated a bowl form mimicking the shape in the example illustrated by Brainerd (1958: fig. 48k), although the Dzibilchaltún piece seems to have been slightly more cylindrical. The example illustrated by Brainerd is carved in a strongly related style but breaks many of the aesthetic laws that governed Chocholá production (Chapter 3). Three of the ceramic fragments discussed by Simmons (1978-1980: 38) depict "a stylized feather headdress" and a hieroglyph that may indicate a date.[45] The fourth contains a fragmentary hieroglyph.[46]

The four Dzibilchaltún sherds were found in "surface and mixed collections at Structures 55 and 95," (Simmons 1978-1980: 38). Unfortunately, these ceramics were not readily identifiable in the Ceramoteca collections at the Centro Regional Yucatán—Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (CRY—INAH) and their Chocholá classification remains uncertain.[47] Simmons (1978-1980: 38) himself emphasized such doubt when he stated that he knew of no other ceramics that looked exactly like the ones reported at Dzibilchaltún. It should be possible to solidly assert or reject this classification soon, though, as the Dzibilchaltún ceramics are currently undergoing review (George Bey 2007, pers. comm.).

Despite Coe's (1973) influential work and Simmons' (1978-1980) little known archaeological report, scholars generally ignored the relatively unprovenienced Chocholá style until Carolyn Tate (1985: 123-124) addressed the issue during a talk presented at the Fifth Palenque Round Table, 1983. Even after Coe published his exhibition catalogue,

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[45] These sherds likely formed part of a single vessel, although Simmons (1978-1980: 38) did not indicate as much.

[46] Presumably this is the fragment linked with a slightly cylindrical, bowl-shaped form, although again Simmons' (1978-1980: 38) report lacked clarity.

[47] Commonly used abbreviations may be found in Appendix A.

scholars were distrustful of the Chocholá corpus for several reasons; many (unacquainted with Simmons' report) avoided discussing looted ceramics on principle while others questioned the authenticity of such finely carved vessels. Tate was the first to expressly respond to the lack of provenience by arguing that the general context provided by academics like Spinden (1913) should be accepted until further evidence proved it unreliable. She also quickly rejected the possibility that the ceramics were modern fakes based on conversations with Michael Coe and Peter Schmidt (Tate 1985: 123-124). Indeed, perhaps Tate's most important contribution resides in the fact that she, like Coe, approached these looted objects from an art historical perspective and thus clearly indicated that they were worthy of scholarly analysis and attention.

Tate's (1985: 124) main concerns lay in defining the style, naming characteristic scene types and briefly analyzing hieroglyphic inclusions. She expanded on the work of previous scholars by noting several salient characteristics associated with three main areas: the technical aspects of the style (typical dimensions, forms, depth of carving and a lack of painting); the image-based aspects (a single scene bounded by a cartouche, with frequent overlap between the two) and the positioning of hieroglyphic texts (in diagonal bands opposite the scenes, although vertical and horizontal texts also occurred occasionally) (Tate 1985: 124). Tate faced time constraints in her talk and logically chose to keep further identification of diagnostic characteristics brief while excluding questionable ceramics. In doing so, she tried to avoid the risk of simply considering broader carved traditions. At this point, too, epigraphy was in its infancy and Tate could only make general assertions regarding Chocholá texts based on Coe's (1973: 22) definition of the Primary Standard Sequence (PSS). In doing so, however, Tate (1985: 125) followed Coe's (1973: 125, cat. 65) identification of the 13 *Ajaw* combination found on one vessel as a date connecting the entire Chocholá corpus with the Late Classic (fig. 16). She noted that this chronology meshed with the appearance and iconographic choices evident in the body of ceramics under consideration.

While the identification of diagnostic features and an acknowledgement of the hieroglyphic texts composed two portions of Tate's scholarly approach, her art historical

perspective led her to fully develop and identify five iconographic themes centered around watery, deity and ballplayer imagery, subjects more fully discussed in Chapter 4. Tate (1985: 132) also proposed that certain types of scenes correspond to specific forms.[48] Ultimately, in an art historical corollary to Spinden (1913) and Brainerd (1958), Tate considered larger contextual issues and used visual analysis to suggest developmental sequences connected with the use of carving. She briefly proposed that some non-Chocholá vessels displaying similar carving techniques and iconography alluded to larger Puuc (i.e. northern) systems of interaction and slateware production influenced by the Chocholá style (Tate 1985: 130-132).[49] She even posited an intra-regional exchange of ideas between the north and the Petén region due to certain iconographic and stylistic inclusions that seemed to parallel southern modes (Tate 1985: 132). This approach to Middle and Late Classic northern iconographic trends continued to appear in the literature long after Tate's original publication, in conjunction with the assumption that northern sites paralleled southern sites in image traditions until the Late/Terminal Classic, at which point the north began to develop its own set of visual styles (see García Campillo 1992: 190; Varela Torrecilla 1998: 39, 214, 216). In Tate's (1985: 132) view, however, Chocholá ceramics were not traded and were only deposited in burials at one small (now thoroughly looted) site somewhere in Yucatán. While Tate's analysis is basically sound from a methodological point of view, she did not have access to the wealth of material now available; my analysis of this data in Chapter 3-7 privileges a slightly different set of conclusions.

With Tate's 1985 article, the Chocholá style regained some small visibility in the literature. Around the time that Tate's talk was published in the Round Table

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[48] According to Tate (1985: 132), representations of the "Slayed Fish Monster" were only found on "restricted orifice vessels," for example, which could also be connected with representations of God L, while "beakers" were more likely to contain waterlily imagery or a single supernatural. She then stated that "this suggests a specific ritual function for each vessel," although exactly what such a ritual function might be remains unclear.

[49] Her consideration of contextual issues remained a suggestion only. In this section, she also presented some of the pots first identified by Coe (1973) as Chocholá and linked them with closely related styles rather than being actual Chocholá specimens (Tate 1985: 130).

proceedings, and in the four years following, epigraphy advanced by leaps and bounds. In 1989, David Stuart (1989: middle glyph, fig. 2) published an article in the first volume of Justin Kerr's *Maya Vase Book* series that included at least one glyph from a Chocholá vessel; he used this and other hieroglyphs to propose a reading of the Primary Standard Sequence as a dedicatory text. According to Stuart (2007, pers. comm.), the Chocholá dedicatory sequence was widely used in such preliminary investigations of ceramic dedicatory formulae because of its consistency. More importantly, Chocholá scribes did not vary sign usage except within clearly recognizable parameters, which facilitated structural analysis. The next year, Nikolai Grube (1990) published his treatise on Chocholá dedicatory formulae in the second volume of the *Maya Vase Book* series. In conjunction with the major aforementioned epigraphic advances, Grube developed a specific reading of Chocholá style texts. Furthermore, it was in the associated *Maya Vase Book* (Kerr 1990) that Chocholá ceramics were again published in large numbers.

Following Stuart's (1989) work on the subject, Grube (1990: 322-325) identified four typical sections of text: 1. "the dedication of the vessel," 2. "a possessed nominal phrase which spells the name of the object, the vessel," (i.e. 'his drinking cup') 3. "a 'prepositional phrase'," and 4. "a sequence of personal names and titles." He also noted the unusual Initial Glyph, altered in the Chocholá sequence to include an *a* prefix and *ajaw* component surrounding the familiar main sign, additions that can be seen at Chichen Itza but which never occur in the southern lowlands. Ultimately, Grube discussed the standard forms used by Chocholá scribes while also noting idiosyncrasies (probably indicative of a regionalized form of ceramic production) specific to the corpus. Variations in the standardized dedication seem to be most fully concentrated in the opening sections of the glyphic string. Grube also connected his analysis with other epigraphic advances by noting the association between vessel form and intended contents (the connection between *atole*—a corn-based drink—and rounded forms, for example) first suggested by Houston, Stuart and Taube (1989).

Grube (1990: 325) concluded his consideration of the Chocholá style by examining name phrases. He was quick to identify standard titles that Chocholá artists

used over and over again, in addition to occasional individual glyphs that seemed to function as more specific nominal information (Grube 1990: 325). Peter Mathews first identified an incised vessel as naming an individual who also appeared in the monumental inscriptions at Xcalumkin for instance; this pot was extremely important in the early 1980s, in part because it connected a person named in the ceramic medium securely with the historical record at a particular northern site (David Stuart 2007, pers. comm.). In his article on dedicatory formulae, Grube identified the Xcalumkin example as Chocholá and proposed a concrete, enduring association between the style and the site.

Grube ended his consideration of Chocholá style texts by returning to the issue of provenience. Like Tate (1985: 132), he noted stylistic similarities between the Petén and the Chocholá corpus (Grube 1990: 327-328). Grube further suggested a specific northern locus of production in Campeche, where Petén characteristics occurred concurrently with early Puuc architectural styles. Ultimately, he suggested Xcalumkin as a strong possibility.

While Grube's (1990) discussion of Chocholá hieroglyphic sequences brought to light an unstudied area within the Chocholá style, there are several problems with his conclusions. First, as will be discussed shortly, archaeological excavations in the modern state of Yucatán and possibly in Campeche as well have now uncovered ceramics in the Chocholá style. Thus, ruling out the eastern area of the Puuc region as a possible production area is no longer possible. Furthermore, the new archaeological evidence occurs at the site of Oxkintok, not Xcalumkin.[50] The strongest piece of evidence introduced by Grube (1990: 328)—the appearance of an artist's name on a Chocholá pot and in the architectural record at Xcalumkin—is also questionable, given that the vessel actually exhibits a pictorially related style and can no longer be included in the Chocholá corpus. Indeed, the vase fails the first test for inclusion since it is entirely incised and

[50] It takes about an additional two years for a published correlation to be made between texts found in the architectural record and those found on Chocholá ceramics (see my discussion of García Campillo's 1992 work below).

exhibits no deep carving.[51] Furthermore, many of the nominal portions of Chocholá texts do not contain proper names; the few examples that are more specific and correspond to people mentioned at northern cites do not correlate to Xcalumkin records, notably. Xcalumkin potters do seem to have made several ceramics in the Chocholá style but in this respect the site seems to have fulfilled a secondary role. The present analysis shows that Oxkintok manufactured far greater numbers of this ceramic type (see Chapters 3-6).

Despite these issues, Grube's contribution remains an enduring one. In addition to providing a concise characterization of Chocholá style texts, he convincingly expanded the corpus based on diagnostic elements contained within the dedicatory texts. While he did not explicitly address differences in vessel form, his work clearly presented some of the evidence needed to include bowls molded to resemble calabashes as well as more easily recognizable examples with smooth walls and deeply carved scenes.

As Grube was working on his treatise dealing with Chocholá dedicatory formulae, archaeological interest in the north intensified and a large number of projects were undertaken in the Puuc region. In the late 1980s, a team of archaeologists from Spain requested and received permission to excavate at Oxkintok for four field seasons. Prior to this concentrated project, Oxkintok's role as a major player in the Early and Late Classic had often been overlooked. The first four years of work, however, established Oxkintok as a site of major importance and subsequent excavations by a group of archaeologists from INAH further indicated its significant role in the sociopolitical sphere (see García Campillo and Fernández Marquínez 1995; Varela Torrecilla 1998; Varela Torrecilla and Montero Ruiz 1995). From 1987 to 1992, the first team of investigators published brief reports regarding their findings. In the fourth such report, two years after Grube's (1990) discussion of dedicatory formulae, José Miguel García Campillo (1992: 185-200) conducted his own epigraphic analysis. He revealed that specific approaches to writing found in the architectural inscriptions at Oxkintok mirrored those appearing on a handful of Chocholá ceramics.

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[51] The vessel was created around 765 CE (García Campillo 1992: 200; Grube 1990: 328), however, which may explain its visual relationship to the Chocholá style in terms of carving, etc.

García Campillo (1992) participated in the new trend focusing on Chocholá texts and made a major contribution when he suggested that Oxkintok acted as possible center of production. In a structural consideration of Oxkintok and Chocholá texts, García Campillo (1992: fig. 1) demonstrated that the same person, complete with associated titles, was named in both cases (figs. 17, 18). He argued that the lord had (extant) two pots made in his honor, which were probably meant for inclusion in his burial (later looted) (García Campillo 1992: 197).[52] Additionally, García Campillo (1992: 186) identified titles found on Chocholá pieces—a head with the number seven attached as a prefix and a toponymic glyph deciphered as *sakunal*—as specific to Oxkintok.[53] He noted that Oxkintok was a Puuc site with major sociopolitical influence and both temporal and geographic connections to the general location of Chocholá manufacture (García Campillo 1992).[54] Ultimately, García Campillo (1992: 198) argued that Oxkintok acted as *the* center of manufacture for the style and functioned as one of the most influential sites connected with the creation and distribution of Chocholá ceramics, conclusions that the present analysis supports.

In elaborating on the epigraphic possibilities offered by an Oxkintok-Chocholá comparison, García Campillo (1992: 188) outlined several stylistic characteristics found on Chocholá ceramics. He suggested that these attributes were connected with idiosyncratic patterns of writing seen only at Oxkintok, including unusual reading orders and the selection of certain syllabic forms (see Chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of these issues). García Campillo (1992: 199) also considered circular cartouches (figs. 8, 19-23) to be diagnostic of sites and dependent areas—like Stephens' Palace, Kupaloma Naox and Santa Bárbara—under the Oxkintok sphere of influence (García Campillo

[52] When García Campillo (1992: 197) was writing, no actual Chocholá ceramics had been found at Oxkintok, a fact that he lamented and that led him to acknowledge the possibility that the Oxkintok Chocholá ceramics were imported instead of actually being manufactured on location. As he suspected, however, new data indicates a pattern of exportation rather than importation (see below).

[53] García Campillo (1992: 198) suggested *Saktenal* or *Sakunal*. More recent epigraphic advances support the latter reading (David Stuart 2007, pers. comm.).

[54] Not only was Oxkintok a major site center during the Middle and early Late Classic periods, it is also located close to the modern towns of Chocholá and Maxcanú.

1992: 199).[55] In conjunction with the historical/contextual epigraphic approaches that had begun to characterize Chocholá analysis, García Campillo (1992: 188-189) contended that the appearance of certain characteristics, rendered in a Late Classic style with normal variability, indicated a particular scribal school centered at Oxkintok during the first half of the eighth century. His analysis led him to connect at least six vessels with this scribal school (García Campillo 1992: 188-189). Furthermore, some of the pieces he considered shared marked stylistic similarity to that illustrated by Spinden (1913) (figs. 9, 17-18, 24-27). García Campillo (1992: 199) also referred to larger distribution patterns, citing the general context associated with two examples: the Ticul (fig. 7) and Peto (fig. 8) pots. According to García Campillo (1992: 200), Oxkintok was not the only site responsible for producing such ceramics. He took Grube's (1990: 328) earlier identification of Xcalumkin further and suggested that it acted as a secondary production center (García Campillo 1992: 200). García Campillo based this proposal on possible visual continuities between the Chocholá style and sites under the Xcalumkin sphere of influence (the West Quadrangle of Ichmac, the Building with the Glyphic Band at Xcochá, the Sculpted Columns at Xculoc and a stela from Xcombec) (García Campillo 1992: 200).[56]

The issue of north-south correspondences proved an enduring one and Garciá Campillo (1992: 190), like Tate (1985) and Grube (1990), addressed the subject. García Campillo noted that after c. 850 CE, the Puuc region underwent a process of self-definition in which it differentiated itself from its southern neighbors by introducing "non-classic" visual characteristics. All three scholars agreed, however, that direct parallels existed in the art and hieroglyphs found across the northern and southern

[55] It is even possible that a Chocholá vessel or one in a related, carved style was removed during illegal excavations of the principal mound (which probably contained hieroglyphic panels) at a small satellite center—Ch'ich'—according to García Campillo (1992: 198), based on conversations with the regional guide, Roger Cuy, who reportedly saw the finds before their removal from the area.

[56] The identification of a second locus of Chocholá manufacture seems to be supported by the fact that several probable Chocholá style fragments may have been recently unearthed at Xcalumkin (Dominique Michelet 2007, pers. comm.).

lowlands during the earlier period—the Classic Tradition sub-phase, as named by the first Oxkintok archaeological team—associated with Chocholá production and the Oxkintok lord (García Campillo 1992: 190). In this framework, the link between the ceramic texts and the monumental record at Oxkintok survived because the architectural inscriptions were associated with "Early Puuc" building styles in almost all cases (Andrews 1986 cited in García Campillo 1992: 190).

In addition to convincingly connecting the Chocholá style with Oxkintok, García Campillo solidified the site's status within the sociopolitical geography of the early eighth century Puuc Maya. The repeated references to a particular lord—the same named in Chocholá texts—in and around Oxkintok indicate a strong program of centralization. One of this leader's titles— "27 successor"—seems to indicate a larger dynasty (García Campillo 1992: 195). The characteristics García Campillo (1992: 194) outlined, combined with the continuation of northern styles similar to those found in the south allow the dates of Chocholá production to be connected with the beginning of the eighth century (c. 713 CE), possibly lasting through the middle and possibly even the end of that century.

García Campillo (1992: 197) also cited a number of concerns faced by modern archaeologists in the Puuc region. Like previous scholars (e.g. Tate 1985), he addressed the paucity of archaeologically provenienced Chocholá finds. He noted their elite nature, which makes them the specific targets of illicit excavations, especially in an area known for heavy pillaging (according to García Campillo, no architectural group in the zone has remained untouched).[57] Furthermore, tombs likely to hold Chocholá finds would have been associated with the Late Classic period and are thus closer to the surface and easier for looters to enter (García Campillo 1992: 198). In this case, the reasons given by García Campillo and, indeed, his overarching argument regarding the connection between

[57] Based on conversations with Carmen Varela Torrecilla, García Campillo (1992: 197) noted that the situation was much the same for the Cuy Polychrome type, which only accounts for fourteen fragments out of over 70,000 ceramic pieces found at Oxkintok, although Chocholá finds are even scantier (only five Chocholá sherds and two whole vessels have been found to date during sanctioned excavations at the site).

Oxkintok and the Chocholá style, are entirely credible, especially given that Chocholá ceramics were found in later excavations at Oxkintok.[58] Nonetheless, García Campillo's statements regarding looting remain pertinent to the Chocholá issue; while the Chocholá style now has an archaeological anchor at Oxkintok, Chocholá finds from other sites remain few and far between. I would add that part of the problem also lies in identifying the Chocholá style from fragments. If part of the dedicatory formula appears or enough of the scene and vessel wall is visible, a Chocholá identification is usually fairly straightforward. One can only imagine, though, how many fragments fail to include either image or text or bear only a small fraction of these larger programs, making such an identification much more problematic.[59]

Despite the major contributions García Campillo (1992) made to issues connected with the Chocholá style, his work remained unacknowledged in the published literature until five years later. In the intervening years, however, Traci Ardren (1996: 237-245) conducted a significant reevaluation of the iconographic complexes associated with the style and presented her findings at the Eighth Palenque Round Table. She, like all other scholars to consider the style, first addressed the common theme associated with looted vessels—the lack of provenience (Ardren 1996: 237). While Ardren (1996: 239-240) deplored the looting of artifacts, she agreed with previous approaches that generally found the context provided by Stephens (1843), Spinden (1913) and Vaillant (1927) acceptable. Such connections were bolstered by the apparent stylistic and iconographic similarities shared by these pieces and other northern ceramics, in addition to the lack of incentive in all cases for the reporters (both the authors themselves and the informants they relied upon) to lie. Ardren (1996: 240) also developed a much larger (unpublished) corpus and, in doing so, identified a pot found in Tomb 2-38 in Copán (fig. 28) as part of the Chocholá style (Longyear 1952: figs. 110b, b'). While similarities certainly exist between the Copán vessel and verifiable Chocholá examples, the association between the

[58] See the discussion of later Oxkintok finds below (e.g. Schmidt 2004).
[59] See the mention of possible Chocholá sherds from Xpuhil below.

Chocholá style and Copán is highly debatable.[60] Indeed, the Copán pot just mentioned can be associated with stylistic expression found along the lower Motagua River Valley to the Copán Valley (Dorie Reents-Budet 2010, pers. comm.). Ardren (1996: 240) also reportedly viewed some Chocholá style ceramics from Dzibilchaltún in the Ceramoteca type collections at CRY—INAH in Mérida, although these ceramics remain basically undocumented.[61]

In discussing the nature of the style, Ardren (1996: 237) mentioned the "chocolatey brown paste" color and the high relief method of carving, akin to that found on monumental sculpture, as Stephens (1843) had already observed much earlier. In briefly defining the style, she noted that Chocholá ceramics are not incised and that they are not mold-made (Ardren 1996: 237). The first is not entirely true; while the imagery associated with the Chocholá style is always rendered in high relief, image details and the hieroglyphic inclusions are often incised. The second statement, regarding the lack of molds, is also debatable, although Ardren is certainly correct in the sense that the vast majority of Chocholá style vessels do not show any conclusive evidence of molding.[62] Ardren (1996: 238) also mentioned forms and materials diagnostic of the Chocholá style

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[60] Copán ceramicists apparently developed a heightened awareness of the ceramics manufactured at other sites. Indeed, the Copán archaeological record contains a great number of imports and ceramics that copy traditions from other regions. The carved style associated with Chocholá examples is not replicated fully in the Copán example, however, while several Copán ceramics indicate an interest in carving traditions generally (David Stuart 2005, pers. comm.; see also Longyear 1952). In the Copán Chocholá-esque example, we may see one way in which the style was received. Additional data, especially regarding chemical composition and fabrication, for both the Copán and the Chocholá pieces will hopefully lead to further investigation.

[61] Simmons (1978-1980; see above) first reported on Chocholá sherds from Dzibilchaltún in an unpublished consideration of ceramics from excavations of the site. Ardren (1996: 240) makes passing reference to Simmons' work as an unpublished "preliminary ceramic typology." The exact location and appearance of these sherds remains a mystery after an extensive perusal of the Ceramoteca type collections, CRY—INAH. Hopefully revisions of the Dzibilchaltún ceramic material will bring these sherds to light.

[62] Carving is used in all cases, but some Chocholá pieces (fig. 29) may reflect a restricted use of a molding or stamping technique (consider the last glyph). If some Chocholá examples do indeed provide evidence of the occasional use of molds, this may relate to regional differences in production.

(see Chapter 3, wherein I present previous definitions of the Chocholá style and propose a new, more specific categorization).

After briefly defining the style, Ardren (1996: 238-239) discussed contextual issues in depth. In her consideration of the technical aspects of the style, Ardren (1996: 238, 240) concurred with Brainerd (1958: 234) regarding the paste, stating that it functioned as part of the Late Classic slateware tradition. She connected slate types with the northern development of a number of elite wares in keeping with the Chocholá tradition of finely crafted ceramics (for a further discussion of the slateware tradition and its connection with the Chocholá style, see Chapters 3, 5, 7). Ardren (1996: 239) also, like Grube (1990: 327-328) and García Campillo (1992: 190) before her, presented Chocholá iconography as in keeping with larger, northern image complexes that experienced great time depth, particularly with respect to later developments of fine orange and slateware types. Possible function was mentioned as well. Ardren (1996: 244) concluded that Chocholá ceramics played a role in exchange relationships and funerary or ceremonial complexes, supported, she argued, by the direct connection with the type of drink held by the vessel in certain cases.

One of Ardren's (1996: 237-283) main positions regarding the Chocholá style came in the form of a direct reaction to statements regarding the similarity between the Chocholá style and that of the southern lowlands made by Tate (1985) during the earlier Palenque Round Table and continued by subsequent scholars (e.g. García Campillo 1992). Ardren (1996: 237-238) categorically rejected the division between northern and southern image styles and carving techniques, and the "incompatibility of the Chocholá pots with the known corpus of Yucatecan ceramics." She stated that this type of argument implies "a restriction of a given technique to a single geographical area, an assumption for which no supporting evidence exists" (Ardren 1996: 238). Northern and southern imagery simply shared, she argued, a number of the same concepts regarding appropriate types of imagery, indicated through the appearance of rulers and deities in both areas and in the Chocholá style (Ardren 1996: 244).

Ardren's main contribution to the Chocholá question resides in her

reinterpretation of the iconography associated with the Chocholá corpus. Ardren (1996: 240) discussed the characteristic way scenes relate to the vessel as a whole, which is diagnostic of the style and will therefore be discussed further in Chapter 3. She also critiqued Tate's (1985) concentration on the containers published by Coe (1973) because they were meant, according to Ardren (1996: 240), to represent "those truly spectacular vessels which Coe and others felt deserved serious academic study. Consequently, [they]…are not necessarily representative of the Chocholá style as a whole." Thus, Ardren included a number of ceramics omitted by Tate (1985). In doing so, she occasionally referred to stylistically related pots (although all of her illustrations clearly can be identified as Chocholá). Furthermore, as I discuss further in Chapter 4, Ardren (1996: 241) offered a different manner of classifying imagery than that presented by Tate (1985). Ardren (1996: 241), for example, included, in order of frequency, "God L, male figures, rulers, single glyphs, God L with God K, vision serpents, palace scenes and ballplayers," although she also called attention to many instances where the imagery diverges from such set scene categories. In this way, her analysis introduced a greater sense of the variety favored by Chocholá craftsmen in addition to emphasizing the appearance of youthful male figures.

Like Tate (1985), Ardren (1996) briefly considered the hieroglyphic texts found on Chocholá ceramics. She noted that about a third of her corpus exhibited diagonal bands opposite the image, while rim bands occurred more rarely, as did glyphic captions within scenes (Ardren 1996: 240). In completing her brief overview of the Chocholá style, Ardren (1996: 244) did not add any significant information to the consideration of Chocholá texts.

A number of articles and monographs have entered the academic sphere in the years since Ardren's publication. The subsequent scholarship indicates two basic trends. A few important archaeological reports appeared. Epigraphic investigations also continue and become more concentrated on specific examples as opposed to the broader, contextually focused studies that characterized previous reports. All considerations from this point on are marked by extreme brevity and a lack of interest in defining the style. In

fact, all subsequent literature deals either with a particular specimen or with specific hieroglyphic sequences and, in doing so, introduces only one or, at the most, a handful of cases. In many instances, the piece in question is compared with other, well-known ceramics in the Chocholá style. The authors provide suggestions relating to the explicit addition of a new type (Green 1997; Pallán Gayol 2006), ancient and modern locations connected with the style (Boot 1997b, 2006; Green 1997; Schmidt 2004; Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005), possible functions for the vessels themselves (Boot 1997a; Grube and Gaida 2006) and greater specificity in reading the hieroglyphic texts so frequently included on Chocholá style ceramics (Boot 1997a, 1997b, 2006; Green 1997; Grube and Gaida 2006; Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005).

Indeed, an article Judith Strupp Green published based on an earlier talk marks a trend in all subsequent epigraphic scholarship dealing with the Chocholá style. The year after Ardren presented her interpretations of Chocholá iconography, Green (1997) presented a short monograph in which she analyzed the text of a single Chocholá vase. She was the first to fully illustrate a calabash-shaped vessel as part of the Chocholá style (fig. 30; Green 1997: figs. 1, 3).[63] Following García Campillo, she argued that the appearance of the *sakunal* title provided a direct link with Oxkintok (Green 1997: 92). While the bowl Green (1997: 95) considered can be added to the list of Oxkintok products, it is unusual in the sense that it displays a dedicatory glyph—the God N glyph—only rarely incorporated into Chocholá hieroglyphic sequences (it does appear in

[63] Earlier, Grube (1990) had included drawings of texts found on calabash-shaped bowls in his consideration of Chocholá dedicatory formula. While this implied inclusion within the style, Grube, as has already been noted, did not expressly connect the form with a specific category of vessels under the Chocholá style umbrella. Green (1997: 92-93) was hesitant to categorically include it within the Chocholá grouping, instead stating that it fell into a related category. In doing so, she noted that Tate (1985: 130-132) suggested an alternate location of production for the related group. Tate, however, only considered ceramics with iconography, never including calabash-shaped vessels in her examination. Green (1997: 93) clearly thought that the piece under consideration should be included in larger Chocholá group, however, as her constant reference to it as Chocholá and the following statement indicate: "The San Diego Bowl is a member of [the]…subset" of Chocholá ceramics that use the term *sajal*, often associated with, and preceded by, a personal name.

at least one other instance; fig. 15). Oddities in the sequence do not stop there, though. Indeed, Green's (1997) paper is particularly noteworthy in that it helps develop a sense of balance between the variability and standardization that artists considered acceptable in creating the style. The unusual sign that either ends the introductory section of the dedicatory formula or begins the section discussing the carving of the vessel, for example, has yet to be deciphered, while the section detailing the exact nature of creation is highly typical (Boot, Looper and Wagner 1996: 2; Green 1997: 95). Green (1997: 98) ended her consideration of the San Diego bowl by suggesting that it too was used in funerary contexts.[64]

The same year that Green (1997) presented her consideration of a particular calabash-shaped vessel, other scholars published an important archaeological report in addition to several additional glyphic readings. In the course of pursuing his degree, Marcos Noe Pool Cab wrote a thesis in 1997 in which he classified and organized ceramics from an excavation conducted by José Huchim Herrera near the Periférico-Cholul (the periférico ringing Mérida). Herrera conducted salvage work at this location because the ongoing construction of a hotel had unearthed some ancient remnants. The excavation area was several kilometers from the actual city of Cholul on one of the byroads that links Cholul and Motul (Pool Cab 1997: 18). The location could not be linked with an actual site in the Archaeological Atlas of Yucatán but Herrera identified a Prehispanic mound and, after excavations had begun, Structure 1-A was identified at the north end of a short platform (Pool Cab 1997: 18). Pool Cab (1997: 23) interpreted the remnants of vault stones in this structure as indicating the elite nature of the residence. Several different burials and offerings were found during excavations, two of which produced some fifteen sherds and two whole vessels identified by Pool Cab (1997: 105-

[64] According to Green, it was probably buried with the person named in its text. The fact that examples like the San Diego bowl are whole and not fragmentary in nature serves to support the burial context suggested by Tate (1985), García Campillo (1992), Ardren (1996) and Green (1997). Just who these pots would have been buried with remains in question, however; ceramics were not always buried with those named in the associated texts.

106) as Chocholá "Molded," from the Dzityá group, following Simmons (1978-1980).[65] These ceramics originated in Level III (Capa III) of Pit 48 (Pozo 48), under a layer of stuccoed floor (Pool Cab 1997: 105-106).

One Chocholá piece (fig. 31) was found in Burial 10 (a primary burial in Cist 15 [Cista 15]), located in Room 4 of Structure 1-A (Pool Cab 1997: 146) and was associated with Stage III (Etapa III; pieces were also found in Burial 20). The burial was that of a young male exhibiting cranial deformation and dental modification (Pool Cab 1997: 146, 158). The body had an east-west orientation and was associated with the following offerings: the Chocholá pot already mentioned, obsidian flakes, and a Chuburná Brown container (Pool Cab 1997: 146). In this case, the example Pool Cab (1997: 146) identified as Chocholá contains the image of a deity in a style unlike that associated with standard Chocholá pieces. Another whole Chocholá vessel was reportedly found in Cist 32 and was associated with the Okinal (facet 1: 550/600-850/900 CE) Complex, Dzityá Group (Pool Cab 1997: 232).

In addition to the important salvage work Herrera and Pool Cab carried out, Pool Cab's (1997) thesis is invaluable for several reasons. Not only does it provide further archaeological information for the style, it also points to the existence of a much wider flung web of ceramic production connected with the Chocholá style than had previously been suggested. The unusual style of the vessels further strengthens the sense of multiple, widely spaced centers of manufacture. The vase found in Cist 32, for example, acts as another odd instance of the Chocholá or a Chocholá related style(s). It is more cylindrical in form and contains a profusion of images, including two serpent heads with volutes and mat designs (Pool Cab 1997: 232). The cavity itself was located outside Structure 1-A and, like the burials, had an east-west orientation. The ceramic piece was located on the south side, where a shell pectoral was also found (Pool Cab 1997: 62).

Pool Cab (1997: 106) noted that while the main area of Chocholá production originated somewhat further south of Mérida, chemical analysis seemed to suggest

[65] Only one of the vessels from the Periférico excavations was available for examination in CRY—INAH at the time of the present investigation.

various sites of manufacture.[66] Furthermore, he also, like many of the scholars before him, explicitly marked the elite nature of the style and, following Ardren (1996), suggested its participation in a trade network that traveled all the way south to Honduras.[67] Based on the fact that the Periférico ceramics were found in burials, where they were presented like offerings, Pool Cab (1997: 106) espoused the idea, expressed earlier by other authors (e.g. Ardren 1996), that these vessels served a ritual function.

To contextualize the Periférico-Cholul examples further, Pool Cab (1997: 73) discussed the Okinal Complex, corresponding to the Oxkintok Regional Complex as defined by Carmen Varela Torrecilla (1998). Varela Torrecilla (1998: 40-41, 232) proposed 500/550-600/630 CE as the date range for the Oxkintok Regional Complex and suggested that it offered some important precedents for later slateware traditions (with pre-slatewares occurring beginning c. 600/630 and fully developing into the slateware tradition by c. 710 CE). While the Okinal Complex corresponds with the Oxkintok Regional Complex, it also lasts longer, according to Pool Cab's (1997: 76) classification. If the Chocholá style can indeed be connected with this complex then such a connection also supports a later dating, given that the chronology developed thus far suggests a locus of Chocholá production beginning around 700 and lasting until at least 750 or possibly 800 CE (see, for example, García Campillo 1992). Furthermore, from an architectural standpoint, structure 1-A resembles architectural styles at Dzibilchaltún and Room 4 also contains several Puuc style jambs, connecting this specific location with other areas in the northern Yucatán Peninsula already associated, at least tentatively, with the Chocholá style (Pool Cab 1997: 23).

In 1997, Erik Boot began an extensive period of publication focusing on specific, individual texts in the Chocholá corpus. He wrote two short monographs that year, proposing a new function for one piece (fig. 32) in the first. In the second, he modified

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[66] See the discussion of ongoing analysis conducted by Ronald Bishop and Dorie Reents-Budet below.

[67] The problematic nature of the Chocholá-Copán connection has already been noted, although trade networks certainly existed between the north and the south. Extended routes of communication might explain the similarity to the Chocholá style exhibited by the Copán find.

García Campillo's reading of the Oxkintok Lord's name (figs. 17, 18) and discussed possible spheres of production. Subsequently, Boot returned to the Chocholá question and wrote another short paper in 2005 discussing dedicatory formulae and featuring several standard instances and one unusual Chocholá piece. He published another short monograph in 2006 dealing with the hieroglyphs, iconography and possible location of manufacture of another pot (fig. 9). Boot (n.d.) is currently drafting another article suggesting yet another location of manufacture.[68]

In his first written work addressing the Chocholá style, Boot (1997a: 64) proposed a new folk classification and identified a woman's name, which he tentatively translated as *Ixik Wi' Balam* for "Lady Root-Jaguar" (fig. 32). Indeed, like the other pieces showing youthful individuals (see Chapter 4), this pot seems to be another portrait vessel, as Boot (1997a: 64) proposed.[69] She does not appear alone, however, as is the case in many of the other Chocholá portraits. A figure attends her, seemingly in the act of painting her face while she holds a paint pot.[70] Because of diagnostic inclusions (spots), this second individual is linked with Hunahpú (Boot 1997a: 64).[71] In this way, Boot has added significantly to the iconographic as well as epigraphic readings since he was able to explicitly connect a female name with a woman pictured in the iconography, something that had been previously overlooked.

Boot considered another Chocholá piece in a short manuscript also drafted in

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[68] I would like to thank Erik Boot for providing me with copies of his as yet unpublished work. He continues to study Chocholá ceramics and has included passing references to several in other works (see Boot 2003).

[69] Others (e.g. Tate 2004: 39) have suggested that the female figure in this example is not a historical figure at all, but rather a representation of the moon goddess. This association arises from the identification of the other figure in the scene as one of the Hero Twins. Even if the female carries moon goddess attributes, however, she and the entity with her may depict historical individuals connected with, or presented in the guise of, certain deities seen as particularly significant to the scribal arts.

[70] While not the most common type of representation in the Maya ceramic corpus, body painting does occur quite frequently (see, for example, Kerr Database: K0764).

[71] The combination of a historical individual and a deity would be unusual in the Maya image record, unless the female impersonates a deity and/or we should undertand the scribe with her as another historical figure impersonating, or associated with, one of the patrons of writing (see footnote 69).

1997 (figs. 17, 18). In a major advance, Boot suggested (1997b: 1) **OL si-?-TOK'** (more appropriately written **OHL si-?-TOK'**) in contrast to García Campillo's previous nominal reading. In considering this example, he combined previous scholarly suggestions and proposed two spheres of production (first proposed by García Campillo [1992] and Grube [1990] respectively) centering around Oxkintok and Xcalumkin. Boot then recalled earlier work by addressing the lack of provenience typically connected with the style before considering the place named on one of the more famous Chocholá vessels, now housed in the Dumbarton Oaks collections (fig. 2).

In considering the Dumbarton Oaks vessel, Boot (1997b: 2) cautiously suggested that it might indicate yet another sphere of production. After providing an overview of the text, Boot (1997b: 2) concentrated most of his attention on the last glyph, a place name. Boot (1997b: 2) suggested **Ti**-**?**-**i** and noted that Dzilam Stela 1 contained several similar combinations of glyphs. He then suggested that the collocation might be a "title of origin" (Boot 1997b: 2). It is certainly true that the initial **Ti** in both renditions of the name can be still seen in many Yucatecan place names; Ticul and Tiho (the ancient name for Mérida) are two examples (Boot 1997b: 2).

Based on the dual reference to place, Boot (1997b: 3) suggested that it must have been a location of some import and might even have been the site now buried under modern Dzilam.[72] More recently, Rubén Maldonado, Alexander Voss and Ángel Góngora (2002: 96, fig. 12c) have suggested *jo* as a reading for the main sign in the Chocholá collocation.[73] The glyph would then read **Ti**-**i**-**jo**, which, if correct, refers to Tiho (i.e. Mérida).[74] The problem of production still remains. Was this pot produced in

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[72] Boot (1997b: 3) stated that "present day Dzilam is built on an extensive archaeological site, formerly dominated by two giant mounds, as the descriptions of Stephens (1843: 293-295, Plate L) and Gann (1924: 166) seem to indicate."

[73] They transcribe the glyphic block as **ti-ho'-i'** (Maldonado, Voss and Góngora 2002: fig. 12c). Houston (1988: 132) was the first to identify the **ho** syllable, now read as **jo** (I will retain the h in the spelling of the town—Tiho vs. Tijo—as it is the most commonly used variation of that typonym).

[74] In fact, the modern Maya in the Yucatán Peninsula still refer to Mérida as Tiho. Maldonado, Voss and Góngora (2002: 94-96) further connect the toponym, following

Mérida (or Dzilam or some northern site)? Or was it a commission sent to any of the possible locations in the Oxkintok or Xcalumkin regions by people from Tiho (or Dzilam, etc.)? As a third possibility, was it intentionally created by a lord from either the Oxkintok or Xcalumkin regions to be gifted to another person in the Tiho area as a way of solidifying political alliances? Stylistic considerations might provide the answer to this question (see Chapter 3). The Mérida connection is particularly interesting when viewed in the context of Pool Cab's (1997) thesis; a fairly standard example of the Chocholá style names a Mérida/Dzibilchaltún location now connected with the appearance of several unusual pieces, implying continuity in production, sociopolitical solidarity and closely knit networks of exchange (see Chapters 6, 7).

Boot returned to the consideration of Chocholá pieces several times in subsequent years. In 2005, he discussed standard vessel types and, like the scholars who first deciphered the dedicatory formula, he used several Chocholá texts to illustrate his points (Boot 2005: 4, 5, 14). While most of the examples he introduced followed standard patterns in naming vessel type, he noted that one played with reversals in an unusual fashion. In this case, the text must be read backward (as indicated by the location of syllabic prefixes to the right rather than to the left of each glyph block), but when read in this order, the text becomes *y uk'ib ujaay* as opposed to the standard *ujaay y uk'ib* collocations (fig. 33) (Boot 2005: 14). As García Campillo (1992) suggested earlier, this pattern of reversal occurs at Oxkintok and seems to be an idiosyncratic development marking scribal traditions associated with the site.

In the next year, Boot (2006) published a short note in which he considered hieroglyphs and iconography found in one example and then suggested a possible location of manufacture (fig. 9).[75] Before moving on to consider the dedicatory formula,

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Schele (1995: 13-14) and Schele, Grube and Boot (1998: 414), with Dzibilchaltún, where the collocation has also been found in emblem glyph form.

[75] The vessel has been variously illustrated by Dieseldorff (1933: Plate 7, fig. 10) and Spinden (1913: fig. 186), who linked it with Calcehtok. Boot (2006: 1-3) connected Spinden's (1913) drawing with the picture published by Dieseldorff (1933) and a later drawing by Baker (Danien 2006: fig. G-7). Neither Spinden nor Dieseldorff mentioned the text evident in Baker's drawing, while Baker only included an extremely sketchy

Boot (2006: 1) researched the history of the piece in question, connecting it with Calcehtok (see Spinden 1913: fig. 186) anciently.[76]

While Boot (2006) stopped short of identifying single artistic hands or scribal groups, he developed a connection between this and other examples. According to Boot (2006), the similarities in the hieroglyphic texts justified the identification of a smaller "group" within the style as a whole. Each of the ceramics contains a reference to the type of container (*u jaay*) and/or the way it functioned (*y-uk'ib*), what it held (various forms of *kakaw*), and its owner/maker (variations of the *chak ch'ok, kelem, sajal, kalomte'* and *bakab* monikers; Boot 2006: 8).[77] Titles can even be combined, as when the scribe included two terms in a single titular phrase: *sajal kalomte'* (fig. 9). The use of *kalomte'* or *bakab* (see fig. 34, last two glyphs) to modify the *sajal* denomination is otherwise unknown in the corpus of Maya hieroglyphic texts (Boot 2006: 9). Boot (2006: 9)

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rendition of the pot's iconography. Both Baker and Spinden, however, mention that the pieces they illustrated were connected with the de Cámara collection in Mérida, while Dieseldorff simply referred to a private collection in Mérida (Boot 2006: 11). This correspondence tends to support Boot's (2006) claim that the Baker drawing and Spinden and Dieseldorff illustrations represent the same piece although multiple ceramics in the Chocholá style are known to have been held in Mérida collections (e.g. the Setina Collection; David Stuart 2005, pers. comm.). Unknown to Boot (2006), Vaillant (1927: 78) included his own drawing of the example illustrated by Spinden and Dieseldorff (Vaillant even cited Spinden's illustration, thus making the correlation particularly concrete). Vaillant's (1927: fig. 291) drawing of the vessel includes both image and text. While Vaillant's rendition of the diagonal text string is sketchy at best, a comparison of this text with that drawn by Baker indicates that the same glyphs appear in the same location, which strongly supports Boot's identification.

[76] According to Boot (2006: 1, 10-11), by 1913 the vessel appeared in the private collections of the Cámara family established in Mérida. Its current location, however, remains unclear. In the early 1930s, a law was passed in Yucatán allowing the confiscation and transferal of private collections to the museum now known as the Museo Regional de Yucatán, Palacio Cantón. At this time, many of the collections in Yucatán were secreted away and/or moved to locations outside Mexico, which may explain why the pot shows up later, in 1974, as part of Alfred Stendahl's collection in the United States (Boot 2006: 10-11).

[77] In the Baker drawing (Danien 2006: fig. G-7), the *kelem* title takes an unusual, hard to identify form. Based on the similarities between this text and the others discussed above, though, Boot (2006: 9) proposed the **ke-KELEM-ma** reading due to the inclusion of the **–ma** syllable.

suggested that this unusual combination probably indicated a form of shorthand, in which the *uyulul[il]* inclusion (normally inserted between the *sajal* and *kalomte'*/*bakab* phrases) has been omitted (see Chapter 5). If this is the case, then the textual constructions actually refer to two different individuals (a *sajal* on one hand, and a *kalomte'* or *bakab* on the other; Boot 2006: 9).

As Boot indicates, some of the seven vessels he groups together exhibit iconographic similarity as well, although image correspondences across the set is much weaker than those highlighted by Boot's textual comparisons. Three of the ceramics originally published by Coe contain, like the Dieseldorff (1933)/Spinden (1913)/Baker (Danien 2006)/Vaillant (1927) example, the portrait of a young man set into a waterlily cartouche. The other three ceramics with similar texts display different imagery (Boot 2006: 8). Boot (2006: 9) suggested that no personal names were included because the combination of titles and portraits would have been enough to identify the individual in question.

Boot's efforts to link various ceramics together based on visual correspondences shares similarities with García Campillo's (1992) successful attempts to link the style to Oxkintok. They are the only scholars to try to group ceramics together within the larger Chocholá classification but each stops just short of trying to explicitly identify individual hands or scribal groups. In addition to further developing iconographic and textual readings, I expand on the work conducted by Boot and García Campillo and identify possible scribal and artistic groups centered in different locations (see Chapters 4, 5).

In addition to his consideration of the Dieseldorff piece, Boot wrote another paper in 2006 that suggested a correlation between several Chocholá style ceramics (figs. 17, 35) and the site of Xculoc. Both these ceramics portray ballplayers in the act of playing. In the first (fig. 17), a scene caption clearly mentions the Oxkintok ruler (Boot n.d.: 3).[78] A diagonal dedicatory formula appears in addition to the scene text and, while displaying standard word choice, exhibits an unusual orientation: the writing not connected with the

[78] Boot (n.d.: 3) also noted that the ball contains a glyphic tag reading **9-NAB'-b'a**, which likely refers to the ball's size (see Chapter 3).

image exhibits multiple reversals of the typical reading order. First, instead of carving each glyph block right side up, with a top to bottom orientation, each sign has been rotated ninety degrees. While the text is then harder to read from any kind of normal viewing position, this orientation clearly creates a continuous string.[79] Within the text string, each glyph is also written backward so that the full-figure bird form of the **k'i** syllable (second glyph from the bottom) faces to the right and the syllabic prefixing of the Initial Sign is inverted (Boot n.d.: 3). Furthermore, in a third and final reversal of the normal format, a right to left reading order is required.

Ultimately, Boot noted the hard-to-read title that culminates the diagonal inscription and linked it to a similar hieroglyph that appears at the end of a rim text from another vessel (fig. 35). Significantly, the rim band is also reversed (both in reading order and individual glyph orientation) (Boot n.d.: 3-4). While the vessels clearly relate to Oxkintok, Boot suggested that the second title/toponymic expression represents another geographic reference found at the site of Xculoc (Boot n.d.: 6-7). Boot tentatively suggested that these ceramics might record an important ballgame involving Xculoc and Oxkintok.[80]

In addition to Boot's work, archaeologists presented material between 2002 and 2005 that provided much needed geographical anchors for the style, which still largely floats unconnected to any kind of verifiable provenience. An archaeological team from Germany unearthed a small sherd at Xkipché in 1997 (fig. 36), for example, and Michael Vallo included it in his dissertation on the ceramics of Xkipché in 2000.[81] While it is extremely fragmentary in nature and nothing can be said regarding the decoration of the

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[79] There seems to be an experiential element to the reading of the Chocholá texts that have a diagonal orientation; just as the vessel would have to be turned to see the entire dedicatory formula when it appears as a rim band, Chocholá diagonal texts are often only fully visible when the cup is lifted (as if to the lips). The sideways orientation on this particular pot may indicate a similar attempt, since it is most easily readable when the vessel is tipped or turned on its side.

[80] Ballcourts occur at both sites; if these ceramics depict an actual historical event it could have happened at either location (Boot n.d.: 6).

[81] The sherd, numbered XK1323 97/39, is currently housed at the regional Ceramoteca in Mérida, in drawer Y-80-90.

vessel walls, it clearly functioned as part of the Chocholá style based on the appearance of two hieroglyphs. The two blocks are composed of the [**lu**-]bat, followed next by a **lu** syllable with **li** suffixing, referring to the carving of the vessel. The **lu** syllable appears in its own glyph block and takes a slightly anthropomorphized form. Both attributes are specific to, and diagnostic of, Chocholá hieroglyphic texts (see Chapter 5). The sherd was excavated as a part of the Lot 1323 finds from Trench 97/2 in Building A10 (Iken Paap 2007, pers. comm.). The pot is a light reddish brown-yellowish red color and was fired in an oxidizing atmosphere (Vallo 2000: 346, n. 7).[82] Vallo also suggested that the layer in which the Chocholá fragment was found dates to between 400/500-700/750 CE. Although these dates are debatable, they would seem to support the temporal connection between the Chocholá style and the eighth century. Several other small fragments from Xkipché have also been tentatively classed as Chocholá (Vallo 2005; Iken Paap 2007, pers. comm.), although these identifications remain uncertain given the fragmentary nature of the sherds in question and the lack of diagnostic hieroglyphic sequences, etc.[83]

In 2004 and 2005, two more publications provided exciting archaeological information for the style. In 2004, Peter Schmidt published a report on the Oxkintok material record in conjunction with an exhibition of ancient Maya masks. Even though Schmidt's (2004) article only briefly summarized some of the most important finds associated with two tombs in the Ah Canul group at Oxkintok, he recorded and illustrated

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[82] Vallo (2000: 346, n. 7) was unable to classify the sherd. Iken Paap has been very generous in providing me with the text of Vallo's thesis as well as translations of the relevant pages.

[83] Iken Paap alerted me to Vallo's (2000: 334, 345, fig. 8) identification of a series of fragments containing hieroglyphs as part of a Chocholá variety within the larger Pocyaxum Composite type. Carmen Varela Torrecilla (unpublished; Iken Paap 2007, pers. comm.) tentatively ascribed another small sherd to the Chocholá style, which she suggested acted as a variety within the larger Habin Gubiado Inciso type. Both were probably identified as Chocholá due to the depth of carving used to create the hieroglyphs in the first case and the iconography in the second. The hieroglyphs are not part of the stylistic standard connected with Chocholá dedicatory formula, however, and the iconography from the second example is not complete enough to allow a concrete association with the style.

(with line drawings) two Chocholá vessels (figs. 37, 38).[84] The two Chocholá ceramics were unearthed sometime during the excavations conducted by INAH archaeologists after the team from Spain had completed their four field seasons.[85] The pots were located in Tomb 8, substructure 4, in Structure CA-14 of the Ah Canul group (Schmidt 2004: 32). This burial was probably constructed before the next building phase, and was situated in a large construction (Structure CA-14) that looks out over the May, Satunsat and Dzib groups at Oxkintok (Schmidt 2004: 32). Structure CA-14 is thus located in the center of the most important region of the site, which exhibits some of the largest configurations in the Puuc region generally (Schmidt 2004: 30). The tomb itself was integrated into the architectural plan through the use of large carved stone blocks and did not show any evidence of fill (Schmidt 2004: 32).

The skeleton found in Tomb 8 was that of a young male (12-14 years of age), probably placed face down with the body oriented in an easterly direction (Schmidt 2004: 32). The dental modification (two or more of his teeth were sharpened and inlaid with jade) and the rich tomb finds, including not only the Chocholá examples (for a fuller discussion of the tomb finds, see Chapter 6), but also other ceramics (lacking imagery), five greenstone beads, a *spondylus* ornament, fifteen carved bone implements and an avian mask, indicate the buried individual's elite status (Schmidt 2004: 32-3). In fact, this young man may have been connected not only with a governing position within the site but also with the scribal arts. Schmidt (2004: 32) proposed that two of the carved bones (fig. 6) resemble the writing tools held by Maya scribes and worn in their headdresses. The carved bones terminate in closed hands with the thumb and one finger extended and may have acted either as brushes (with hair tips, now decayed, tied to the ends) or as ornamental pins for the hair or clothing (Taschek 1994: 110-111, 128-129, figs. 31b, 42e;

[84] Both ceramics are now housed in the Museo Regional de Yucatán, Palacio Cantón. One is on permanent display and the other resides in the bodega.
[85] The untimely death of the lead archaeologist—Ricardo Velázquez Valadés—unfortunately means that Schmidt's publication is, at least for the moment, the only accessible record regarding these Chocholá finds besides the pieces themselves.

see also Chapter 6).[86]

Also found in Tomb 8, a long, needle-like bone contains a detailed hieroglyphic inscription naming the original owner as the same Oxkintok lord mentioned on the other pots discussed earlier by Garciá Campillo (Schmidt 2004: 33, based on a personal communication with David Stuart; see also García Campillo 1992). Thus, Schmidt's (2004) publication not only provided much-needed archaeological context, his findings support pervious suggestions regarding locations of manufacture.[87] Given the evidence presented earlier by García Campillo (1992), this new data linking a subsidiary individual not only with governing lord but also with the Chocholá style and possibly with the scribal arts provides an even more emic view of the context within which Chocholá ceramics were created. Furthermore, the tomb itself dates to the Late Classic (c. 650-750 CE) and thus solidifies the manufacture of the Chocholá style in the c. 700-750/800 CE time period (Schmidt 2004: 33).

In the year following Schmidt's publication, Alfonso Lacadena García Gallo and others (Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005) presented a paper on recent finds from Oxkintok.[88] In "Hallazgo de Fragmentos Cerámicos de Estilo Chocholá con Jeroglíficos en

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[86] The rendition of the hand, with thumb and forefinger extended, recalls the gestures commonly seen made when scribes are depicted in the midst of the creative process. If Schmidt is correct in his comparison, then such objects might have held a dual function, acting at once as tool and ornament, since many artists are also depicted with brushes in their hair or emerging from their headdresses (see Kerr Database: K1196 for hand position and headdress ornamentation).

[87] The youth of the individual in question does introduce some concerns in trying to identify rank, occupation, etc.

[88] Dr. Ricardo Velázquez Valadés was the first author named in the presentation. He was the director of INAH excavations at Oxkintok after the archaeological team from Spain had completed their work at the site. Unfortunately, however, Dr. Velázquez, died before the excavations were finalized and much of the Oxkintok material remains unclassified and unpublished. He was named as the first author in the talk given at the Segundo Congreso Internacional de Cultural Maya in memoriam, and the talk itself is one of the only public presentations of material relating to the later excavations at Oxkintok to date. I would like to thank arqlga. Yoly Palomo at the CRY—INAH Ceramoteca, for providing me with the manuscript for this talk. The edited volume of papers from the Segundo Congreso is currently in press and will hopefully include the drawings of the sherds illustrated during the talk (Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005).

Oxkintok," the authors examined the Oxkintok material record and noted the appearance of four Chocholá sherds during the 1996 and 1998 field seasons conducted by the INAH archaeological team.[89] Thus, the Chocholá style now has a secure, archaeological anchor at Oxkintok, complete with multiple contexts.[90]

In addition to reporting on important archaeological finds, Velázquez Valadés (et al. 2005) and colleagues made significant epigraphic arguments in line with the scholarly trend during this time. The authors stated that ceramics without scenes or vertical or diagonal glyph bands (like the calabash-shaped vessel discussed by Green [1997] and Grube [1990]) can still be connected to the style through orthographic and technical similarities (Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005: 2). While such a connection had been long recognized, this was the first time that any author expressly linked these forms to the corpus and provided conclusive support.[91] Furthermore, the new archaeological context Velázquez Valadés (et al. 2005) and colleagues and Schmidt (2004) provided supports earlier suggestions that Oxkintok acted as a center of production for the style.

Three of the fragments were found in October of 1996 in Square 10F(22), Level III in the northeast corner of the May group closest to structure MA-3 (Velázquez

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[89] The first series of excavations, headed by Miguel Rivera Dorado and composed of archaeologists from the University of Madrid, excavated Oxkintok from 1986-1991; no Chocholá ceramics were found during these excavations (García Campillo 1992; Schmidt 2004). The INAH team, led by Ricardo Velázquez Valadés, conducted excavations from 1996-2003 and unearthed two whole vessels (the Tomb 8 finds published by Schmidt [2004] and the four sherds presented by Velázquez Valadés [et al. 2005] and colleagues). Velázquez Valadés showed David Stuart (2007, pers. comm.) these Chocholá fragments during a visit to the site in 1999.

[90] The only reports of these contexts, however, lie in Schmidt's (2004) publication and the co-authored presentation (Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005), due to Dr. Velázquez's untimely death.

[91] The reader will remember that both Grube (1990) and Green (1997) presented such examples as part of the Chocholá style but did not address a re-definition of the style directly and, in doing so, left the inclusion of such ceramics in doubt. While Lacadena and his co-authors (Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005) did not clearly demonstrate the similarities they mentioned, beyond the specific, repetitive hieroglyphic references to be discussed below, they were the first to offer direct reasons for such additions to the corpus. The veracity of this evidence will be demonstrated as the definition of the Chocholá style is solidified (see Chapters 3, 5).

Valadés et al. 2005: 5). These fragments were found in conjunction with a large quantity of sherds from other ceramic types, along with obsidian fragments and animal bones, which led the excavators to conclude that they had encountered a midden or garbage dump (Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005: 5). A fourth fragment was found in 1998 in Square 10-6(23), located between structures CA-5 and CA-15.[92] While the sherd is highly fragmentary, an unreadable sign, followed by a readable syllable—**yu**—can be discerned (Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005: 6). Despite its brevity, this fragment can also be related to the vessels already mentioned, which, in turn, connect to the Chocholá style at large, because exactly the same presentation of syllables, in the same order, appear elsewhere in the corpus (Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005: 6).

Velázquez Valadés (et al. 2005: 6-7) and colleagues ended their discussion of the Oxkintok finds by noting the major stylistic variation found in the ceramics associated with Oxkintok. The group of vessels that contain an unusual title (including the sherds found at Oxkintok)[93] differ, stylistically from those mentioning the name of the city (e.g. fig. 39, penultimate glyph). Furthermore, both these groups present slightly different styles from those ceramics that mention the Oxkintok lord **OHL si-?-TOK'** (e.g. fig. 17; Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005: 6). Thus, the ceramics associated with Oxkintok demonstrate, in one way or another, a marked variety in "forms and themes and also some very distinct styles and qualities of execution that range from finely created representations and inscriptions to executions in a cruder form" (translation by author; Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005: 7).[94] This implies various artistic traditions and might also indicate a longer time depth or multiple artistic groups responsible for the creation of the style (Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005: 7). Such variability could also be linked to the

[92] José Manuel Estrada Faisal found the sherd while removing the materials resulting from the 1989 excavations of Structure CA-5 conducted by the team of archaeologists from Spain (Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005: 6).
[93] Cholom or Choloom (see Green 1997: 96; Grube 1990: 327; Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005: 5).
[94] The original text from the manuscript of the talk reads "una amplia variedad de formas y temáticas y también unos muy distintos estilos y calidades de ejecución, que van desde las representaciones e inscripciones finamente acabadas hasta las ejecutadas de forma más cruda" (Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005: 7).

different sociopolitical status of individual intended receivers.

Velázquez Valadés (et al. 2005: 7) and colleagues suggested that the Chocholá evidence connected with Oxkintok shows that the political structure in the north functioned similarly to that found in the south. *Sajal*, for instance, is an oft-used title in both regions. Subsidiary *sajalob* are understood to have controlled particular areas/sites while under the sway of northern kings who, with the help of these regional governors, exerted a more extended power base that stretched across such locations. Furthermore, the authors proposed that the appearance of the title in Chocholá examples supports Houston and Stuart's (2001) suggestion that the institution of this position (*sajal*) was not only associated with minor centers. In this case, Velázquez Valadés (et al. 2005: 7) and colleagues clearly identified Oxkintok as a major site and the appearance of such a moniker at that location proved that it could also be found at large centers as well. In this scenario, the *sajalob* attended the court of the principal *ajaw* (Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005: 7).

No additional publications provide detailed archaeological information, but in 2006 Nikolai Grube and Maria Gaida supplemented Grube's original consideration of Chocholá ceramics by including and discussing two pieces they identified as part of the style in conjunction with an exhibition in Berlin (figs. 40, 41). In the exhibition catalogue entries, they introduced several original observations. First, the authors detailed the actual creation of such ceramics—the forming of the shape, drying, carving in the leather hard stage and, finally, firing (Grube and Gaida 2006: 184). Second, Grube and Gaida (2006: 184) suggested that Chocholá style ceramics could now be associated with archaeological excavations at Xcalumkin, Oxkintok, Xkipché, Acanceh and Ek' Balam. Such possibilities were not investigated (or cited) further, however, and corresponding archaeological reports have yet to be published for many of these sites. Several of these centers (like Oxkintok) can indeed be linked with Chocholá specimens, and many have been connected with general provenience in the past (e.g. Acanceh in Brainerd 1958: 234-235, fig. 61c). Fragments were also reportedly found during recent excavations at Xcalumkin, although a Chocholá identification is not entirely certain at

this stage (Dominique Michelet 2007, pers. comm.). Ultimately, Grube and Gaida concluded that such distribution patterns reflect the importance of a style that was by no means secondary to the polychrome production of the southern Maya area. Such a suggestion remains valid, even if the sites associated archaeologically with the style must be further restricted (Grube and Gaida 2006:184-187).

In addition to discussing several overarching concerns, Grube and Gaida (2006) included specific iconographic and epigraphic interpretations in each of the two exhibition catalogue entries. In their consideration of the text, Grube and Gaida (2006: 186) noted that the scribe had chosen not to include a proper name and stated that titles apparently were more important than a particular individual identity in these cases. Interestingly, while scholars have long recognized that personal names were often omitted in Chocholá inscriptions (see Grube 1990), no explanation for this omission was proposed until 2006, when Grube and Gaida and Boot all addressed the issue. Grube and Gaida's stance contrasts with Boot's (2006: 9) in this case. Boot suggested that no personal names were included because the combination of titles and portraits would have been enough to identify the individual in question.

In another case of academic difference, Grube and Gaida (2006: 186-187) suggested that the *sajal* title—repeatedly included in the Chocholá corpus—became the highest form of rank in the Yucatán Peninsula during this period in contrast to Velázquez Valadés' (et al. 2005: 7) co-authors' proposal that *sajalob* governed under ruling kings in the north as in the south. Grube and Gaida (2006: 186-187) acknowledged that the title was never treated as equivalent to the institution of kingship due to the fact that several characters from the same location could be so named at any given time. This relates to the view that northern scribes did not use the paramount *ajaw* title at all (see García Campillo 1992: 195; Grube 1994). In actuality, however, the lord designation does seem to appear in the north, notably at Oxkintok (David Stuart 2007, pers. comm.), and in a few Chocholá inscriptions (fig. 42), which supports the Velázquez Valadés (et al. 2005) view of northern political organization.

The vessels that Grube and Gaida (2006: cats. 27, 28) illustrated are important not

only because they add to the known corpus but because they introduce some unusual variations as well. In addition to the main dedicatory formula, for instance, the larger of the two ceramics (fig. 40) also contains a subsidiary, diagonal text located opposite the iconographic scene and incised within a rectangular border. The actual text is completely in keeping with other Chocholá diagonal strings, but the combination of both a rim and a diagonal series of hieroglyphs is unique (Grube and Gaida 2006: 187). The second piece—which takes the shape colloquially referred to as the 'poison bottle' type—provides an example of an extremely unusual form (fig. 41). It also seems to support the idea that the style as a whole crosscuts types and varieties. The high shine created by the dark, glossy surface treatment looks glaze-like and seems to indicate that this piece forms a variation of standard plumbate types (see Shepard 1948).[95] The manner of rendering the central portrait head in a vegetal frame, the use of a typical Oxkintok title—the *saktenal* toponym—and the fact that any painting was omitted probably led Grube and Gaida (2006: 189-191) to identify this piece as Chocholá, although there is the slight chance that it formed part of a highly related tradition instead.[96] In addition to the odd form, the glyphic texts also deviate from the standard dedicatory formula and Grube and Gaida (2006: 189) suggested that it marked the vessel as the *y-otoot* or house/container for *may* (tobacco).[97] In a rare case of specific personal naming, the text refers to a female

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[95] Known for their luster, plumbates were made from a specific paste type (ranging in color from grey to orange) and a particular method of forming the slip that results in high gloss, grey or olive tones, like the piece in question. The surface shine comes from the slipping technique and not from polishing the vessel prior to firing. Some examples take shapes similar to that found in the Chocholá piece (fig. 41) and even occasionally display 'handles' (see Shepard 1948: 76, 91, 93, fig. 11h).

[96] I agree with Grube and Gaida in their Chocholá identification but Coe (1973: cat. 73) included the vessel in the same publication where he presented a number of Chocholá style ceramics and did not, significantly, classify this piece as part of the corpus.

[97] Grube and Gaida's (2006: 190) identification of the plant used to create the cartouche surrounding the image opposite the text string as *Nicotiana tabacum or Nicotiana resticum* further supported this suggestion. Indeed, as Houston, Stuart and Taube (2006: 114) state when discussing this vessel,

> Another such reference to *may*, 'tobacco pow[d]er,' occurs on a small flask that refers to the owner (a woman?) on one side and, on the other side, just between two handles for suspension, three plant leaves; their idiosyncratic

(presumably the individual pictured opposite) as *chilaan* (or priest) *?-k wuk tzikin* (Grube and Gaida 2006: 191).

In a continuation of the epigraphic interest in the Chocholá style, Carlos Pallán Gayol (2006) included two important pieces in his recently completed thesis on hieroglyphic texts in the Public Registration of Collections in Mexico. While Pallán Gayol (2006: 79, 83) discussed two unpublished calabash-shaped examples (fig. 43), more significant yet is the fact that he classed these bowls as Chocholá and provided an in-depth clarification of why such unusual forms could be considered a part of the style. He gave the emphatic use of carving, employed in these cases to represent a natural form, as well as the choice of a fine, 'chocolaty' colored paste as the primary reasons for inclusion (Pallán Gayol 2006: 79). One of the ceramics also contains additional characteristics specific to the Chocholá style. The unusual initial glyph, the omission of the "Flat-hand verb" (typically used to mark completion in the south), the selection of regionalized glyphic and syllabic forms and the extensive use of particular titles all relate to diagnostic aspects of the dedicatory formula as first developed by García Campillo (1992) and further refined by Pallán Gayol (2006: 83; see also Chapters 3, 5).[98]

As Pallán Gayol (2006: 80) developed his translation of the text, he suggested that the scribe in question intentionally introduced a semantic coupling that linked two people, the first identified by a title alone and the second (like the individual mentioned in the vessel illustrated by Grube and Gaida [2006: cat. 28]) specifically named *K'anil*

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pattern of three circles probably corresponds to Maya conventions for the tobacco plant.

None of the chemicals associated with nicotine, however, were found in the various samplings (tested using a variety of methods, including gas chromatographic analysis; Grube and Gaida 2006: 189). Thus, they suggested that the container was originally meant to hold tobacco but was later used for some other purpose (Grube and Gaida 2006: 189). Based on the chemical analysis, black ink was posited as the most likely material held by this container at the end of its use period (Grube and Gaida 2006: 189).

[98] Pallán Gayol (2006: 89) also dated the style as a whole to the period between 711 CE and 771 CE (following Grube's [1990: 328] identification of the style with Xcalumkin) but cautioned that a 100-year margin of error should be allowed.

*Mo'o K'uk'u'm*.[99] Pallán Gayol (2006: 86-87) argued that this poetic device, which deviated from the standard dedicatory formula by excluding vessel contents, stemmed from artistic competition in the region. In any case, according to Pallán Gayol (2006: 90), the hieroglyphic coupling alludes to an exchange, during which a *sajal* gifted the bowl to *K'anil Mo'o K'uk'u'm*, presumably as a symbol of the alliances between the two different parties.[100] Like other scholars before him (see Tate 1985), Pallán Gayol (2006: 90) suggested that it was ultimately buried with its owner, as evidenced by its remarkable state of preservation.

### *Ongoing Work*

In addition to my present work on the subject, scholars continue to examine the Chocholá style. In the 1970s, around the time of the Grolier Club exhibition, Ronald Bishop and Dorie Reents-Budet began testing a number of unprovenienced ceramics in museums and private collections in Mexico and the United States as well as in national collections in Mexico (like the Museo Regional de Yucatán, Palacio Cantón). In working with such material, they have sampled several Chocholá pieces held by the Smithsonian as well as a few non-Chocholá specimens from excavations at Oxkintok. At this stage, however, additional sampling is required, both of the archaeological material associated with Oxkintok and of the Chocholá style: the current "chemical data are not sufficient to generate a statistically valid chemical profile for Late Classic production at Oxkintok" (Dorie Reents-Budet 2010, pers. comm.). Of the few Chocholá pieces sampled thus far, some may initially have a stronger alignment with Chunchucmil, but these results could

[99] Pallán Gayol (2006: 86) sited the similar, though inverted structure between this name and the famous Copán king's name, K'inich Yax K'uk' Mo'o as further evidence for the nominal reading of *Mo'o K'uk'[u']m*.

[100] Pallán Gayol (2006: 90) suggested that this type of exchange might relate to the large number of God L figures, widely identified as merchants, appearing in Chocholá iconography. He also took the vessel found in the Copán burial as evidence for this long distance exchange network, but such an inference is problematic, given the issue of identifying the Copán example as Chocholá (Pallán Gayol 2006: 90).

be misleading—the high number of chemical samples for Chunchucmil may have skewed the comparison "due to the mathematical rules of abundance" (Dorie Reents-Budet 2010, pers. comm.). Additional samples were taken at Oxkintok in 2010, which will hopefully clarify some of these vagaries. Bishop and Reents-Budet interpreted the chemical diversity currently evident in the small extant sampling as reflecting a northern locus of manufacture, combined with multiple centers of production and the exploitation of discrete clay sources. Their findings coincide with the current distribution of archaeologically provenienced ceramics as well as the iconographic and epigraphic evidence (developed further in Chapters 4, 5; Dorie Reents-Budet 2007 and 2009, pers. comms.). As Bishop and Reents-Budet continue their work, their findings will hopefully refine what is currently a rather amorphous chemical picture.

Many of the ceramics housed in the Mérida Ceramoteca (CRY—INAH) await in depth consideration as well. A series of sherds coming from the same pot were found at Xpuhil, for instance.[101] They evidence great depth of carving, which suggests a Chocholá classification, but the sherds are so fragmentary in nature that the iconographic program cannot be discerned. Without a fuller reconstruction, it can only tentatively be connected with the Chocholá style, either as a part of the style itself, or as part of a larger carving tradition strongly related to the Chocholá ceramic manifestation. Furthermore, a host of related objects can also be found in the Ceramoteca. While this is not the place for a listing of all possibly related styles, one particularly interesting example (Portia Gubiado?) shows up at Calakmul (fig. 44). This partial vessel is associated with the later Terminal Classic period and is thus separated from Chocholá production by at least 100 years or so. The form belies the temporal gap, however; it mimics the stylized gourd form evident in the ceramics illustrated by Pallán Gayol and also incorporates the dedicatory formula in a rim band, although this text string bears no resemblance to the typical Chocholá dedicatory formula. This piece seems to clearly demonstrate the longevity of the carved tradition manifested by the Chocholá style and the continued

[101] The sherds (numbered XPH25) are currently housed in the Mérida Ceramoteca, Drawer C-7-1.

importance of this aesthetic, even after the production of Chocholá ceramics ceases (see Chapter 7). Additionally, tentatively identified Chocholá ceramics may have been recently excavated at Xcalumkin (Dominique Michelet 2007, pers. comm.). These vessels are still undergoing analysis, however, and have yet to be published in any form, thus defying a secure classification at this early stage.

A number of the calabash-shaped and stylized calabash-shaped bowls have also come to light recently, although they, like many of the Chocholá ceramics containing iconography, also lack provenience (Sylivane Boucher 2007, pers. comm.). Unfortunately, no information exists regarding these ceramics, which are also unpublished. Luckily, arqlgas. Sylivane Boucher and Yoly Palomo are in the process of cataloguing these examples for publication in the near future (Boucher 2007, pers. comm.).

### *Conclusion*

From a historiographic point of view, people have been interested in carved northern ceramics exhibiting detailed iconography and texts since the beginning of Maya scholarship. Indeed, the Chocholá style can be associated with a number of firsts in the development of Maya studies. The first published explorations (Stephens 1843), the first major art historical investigation of ceramics (Spinden 1913), the first attempts at ceramic seriation (Brainerd 1958; Vaillant 1927) and the first translation of the dedicatory formula (Coe 1973; Grube 1990; Stuart 1989) all included images of Chocholá pots. Additionally, one of the most cited works of Maya scholarship (Coe 1973) contains the first effort to define the style. Individually and as part of the collective, these works attest to the importance such vessels hold for Mayanists, not to mention their significance at the time of production.

The looting that has plagued the style has not stopped subsequent academics from trying to further refine our view of the northern ceramic sphere generally and such deeply carved ceramics specifically. A trend can also be recognized in more recent scholarship

on the subject, which focused initially on imagery and identification (e.g. Ardren 1996; Tate 1985) before moving into broad epigraphic analyses (e.g. Grube 1990) followed by detailed perusals of individual textual examples (e.g. Boot 1997a, 1997b, 2006, n.d.). The initial two stages focused on identifying and discussing Chocholá attributes and accordingly worked with large bodies of material. This trend continues, though in severely reduced form, during the final, most current phase, which emphasizes a more detailed examination of context as opposed to the broader contextual interpretation presented in the initial stages. While context is certainly not ignored in the final, most current phase, it has taken on a secondary role. As these later phases of examination developed, archaeological information also began emerging, although such data often appear in obscure locations and take years of synthesis and analysis before the final publication appears (e.g. Pool Cab 1997; Vallo 2000).

When the material dealing with Chocholá ceramics is brought together in a unified manner, as I have done here, a major advance in the understanding of the Chocholá style can be seen.[102] The definition of the style itself has become slightly clearer since Coe's original, general classification in 1973, although many aspects have yet to be explicitly addressed (see Chapter 3). Furthermore, a basic understanding of the types of scenes found on Chocholá vessels as well as the fact that ceramics that do not incorporate iconography participated in the style is now evident. What is more, our understanding of the dedicatory formula found on Chocholá ceramics has reached a higher degree of resolution, both in the recognition of characteristic elements as well as

[102] This literature review, while semi-exhaustive, does not incorporate a consideration of shorter references to the Chocholá style. Mary Ellen Miller (1999: 212) for example, briefly considers one Chocholá piece in her introduction to Maya art and architecture, while Grube (2001: 429, 435) includes a brief mention of the Chocholá style, complete with a formerly unpublished illustration, in the glossary to his edited volume *The Maya: Divine Kings of the Rainforest*. In both cases (and in other short references to specific ceramics in the style), Chocholá vessels are used to briefly illustrate a certain aspect of Maya culture and/or ceramic production and do not significantly increase an understanding of the Chocholá style as a whole. Thus, for the purposes of reviewing the literature on the subject, these brief mentions have been omitted, although they may appear cited elsewhere in the present work.

in the identification of unusual sequences. Perhaps most importantly, while archaeological information still remains at a premium, the style can now be connected with several northern sites. This allows greater chronological specificity and, increasingly, archaeologists are attempting to associate the style with specific types and varieties within the type-variety mode of classification.[103] This material, as a whole, provides the basis from which I develop further definitions of the style and a more nuanced look at the iconography, hieroglyphic inscriptions and geographic and temporal distribution.

Indeed, the time has come to reevaluate the Chocholá style beginning with a revision of the way it is classified from an art historical point of view. After a clear rubric for inclusion or exclusion has been developed, the imagery and texts can be examined in the effort to identify the kinds of messages elites were trying to project through ownership or send through exchange. The stylistic approach I take in considering the iconography and the textual inclusions also allows me to begin grouping ceramics into sets based on likely proximity of manufacture, which in turn enables a clearer picture of northern production. Ultimately, while I provide individual readings in line with current scholarship on the subject, I return to a heavily contextual approach. With the concrete time frame and the archaeological anchors as well as general provenience now available, I am able to provide a more nuanced consideration of the sociopolitical and economic interactions in which Chocholá ceramics participated. Ultimately, from an even broader perspective, I am able to connect the aesthetics that governed Chocholá production to past ceramic traditions in addition to indicating the way in which the style relates to later developments.

[103] A brief summary of the pertinent information is provided in Appendix B for ease of reference.

## Chapter 3
## Defining the Chocholá Style

### *Introduction*

Stylistic studies often face the criticism that different examinations of the same data result in as many different conclusions as there are analysts. Yet style also reflects precisely the kind of small-scale changes and expressions of identity that are not visible using other modes of analysis. In the present work, I am interested in style at several different levels. I must, for example, define and categorize the objects of study: ancient Maya Chocholá style ceramics, a group of vessels that are largely unprovenienced and demonstrate marked variability in appearance and form (see figs. 8, 9, 12, 15, 16). The necessity of stylistic analysis does not end there, however. I also need to be able to recognize the work of a single artist when it appears across several examples (figs. 29, 45; see Chapter 5). In an extension of the same goals, I should be able to rely on a set rubric in order to group together ceramics that share dramatic similarities but that are at the same time clearly made by different individuals. Furthermore, some clusters display marked stylistic variation. While each set can be linked to the larger Chocholá type, such disjunction seems to indicate widely disparate centers of production. My consideration of style must therefore also allow broader levels of investigation. The effort to tie this body of material to specific locations in the northern Yucatán Peninsula c. 700-800 CE, for example, requires the identification of patterns found not only in the ceramic medium but also reflected in the art and inscriptions appearing in monumental architectural programs.

Identifying and defining parallels in visual details might at first seem to be child's play but in actuality proves quite difficult. Take, for example, the way the Chocholá style has been dealt with in the literature. Michael Coe (1973), Carolyn Tate (1985) and Traci Ardren (1996) have each attempted to define the style. Other scholars like Nikolai Grube (1990) and José Miguel García Campillo (1992) have responded to this work by

conducting more focused analyses of particular ceramics.[104] These authors and others have all made important advances in identifying a cohesive body of pottery based on similarities in the techniques of manufacture, the appearance of iconography and the inclusion of hieroglyphic texts. The criteria needed to include or exclude as yet unclassified vessels, however, remain relatively vague and require further development. Frequently, for example, northern ceramics that do not conform to already established typologies are tentatively lumped into a 'Chocholá' grouping if they exhibit carving of any kind (see Vallo 2000, 2005).

Patterns of surface modification provide only a partial picture of artistic choice. Particular vessel forms are also often temporally and geographically distinct. Furthermore, the Maya frequently selected specific shapes in coordination with certain iconographic types.[105] Yet the two different kinds of stylistic expression are rarely considered concurrently. A more holistic approach that encompasses both art historical and anthropological/archaeological patterns of stylistic analysis is required. Art historians typically examine image-based qualities while anthropologists and archaeologists tend to concentrate on technical considerations. While methodologies framing the study of style are well developed in these disciplines, the traditional separation between fields has meant that the advances offered by one are not available in other contexts. The fact that art historical approaches to style, while complex, have been directed towards the consideration of Western artistic traditions further complicates the situation. Esther Pasztory (1993) has pointed out that Mesoamericans used style in a distinctly different, and in many cases highly conscious manner (see also Cash's [2005: especially pages 71-72] assertions regarding the consciousness of Maya stylistic choice in architecture). The Maya were no exception and the Maya awareness of stylistic expression as an indicator of power is perhaps most clearly demonstrated by the

[104] Many additional references to Chocholá ceramics occur as well, of course, in exhibition catalogues and other texts (see, for example, Grube 2001: 435; Grube and Gaida 2006: 184-191; Spinden 1913: fig. 185).

[105] One such example is the reclining individual who appears repeatedly in the Pabellon Molded-Carved corpus of Maya ceramics. The supine figure is almost always found on the sides of shallow bowls (Werness 2003).

importation, at conquering centers, of artistic styles associated with vanquished capitols. At sites like Piedras Negras and Tonina, for instance, monuments seem to borrow the styles of those they conquered (Pasztory 1989; Schele and Miller 1986). As Pasztory (1989: 29) states, when discussing Tonina Monument 22, "We do now know how this was done: a Tonina artist may have imitated Palenque style, or a Palenque artist may have been made to carve the relief as an added humiliation." In either case, this and other sculptural works point to a concrete, specific Maya awareness of regional style: "We might even say that erecting a Palenque-style conquest monument at Tonina was a reaffirmation of the continued separate existence of Palenque" (Pasztory 1989: 30). Furthermore, such evidence also indicates active manipulation of stylistic awareness for ideological gain. Thus, using a perspective that privileges art historical, anthropological and archaeological approaches while also emphasizing a specifically Maya way of creating and manipulating style offers a fuller picture of diagnostic characteristics.

Building upon previous scholarship, I refine the current definition of the Chocholá style. In order to do so, I need to develop a cohesive methodology for the way in which I analyze appearance. The resulting framework not only informs my approach to classifying and categorizing Chocholá vessels, it also enhances the analytic possibilities outlined above and directs my entire approach to such ceramics as seen in subsequent chapters. The theoretical basis I propose is overtly art historical in nature but I include anthropological and archaeological perspectives as well, in an effort to elucidate the different processes governing Chocholá production. I also propose a corrective for the Western-based perspective offered in standard art historical modes of investigation. I begin with the current definition of the Chocholá style as it appears in the literature to date, given that my overarching goal in this particular chapter is to respond directly to, and further improve, the precision with which this ceramic grouping is viewed.

*The Current Definition*

Michael D. Coe (1973: 114), the first scholar to group together and name as Chocholá this subset of deeply carved northern ceramics, simply stated typologically:

> Sites near Chocholá and Maxcanú, respectively 30 and 65 kilometers southwest of Mérida, Yucatán, have produced a group of spectacular vases carved in a uniform style, in a light- to dark-brown ware which occasionally might be gray or blackish. The vast majority are cylindrical in shape, and some have post-fire paint. Vessels in this style are reported from as far afield as Jaina Island…and Peto, Yucatán…, but all must have been manufactured in the Chocholá area.

Coe (2008, pers. comm.), in fact, originally selected the name 'Chocholá' because a number of looted examples came to light in the modern town of Chocholá. In working with these vessels, most have simply referred to Coe's catalogue and original, rather brief discussion of diagnostic characteristics.

Only two scholars, Carolyn Tate (1985) and Traci Ardren (1996), have made additional remarks regarding the classification of the style as a whole. Tate (1985: 124) went into greater detail regarding the quality of carving evident on Chocholá vessels, while also indicating the frequent burnishing of unslipped surfaces and the application of specular hematite or cinnabar to carved areas.[106] She further noted several main, often overlapping characteristics (Tate 1985: 124). These included height (between 10-15 cm), form (hemispherical bowls, beakers and cylinders, all lacking a supporting base), decoration and paste color (lack of paint except in small, post-fire additions, and the use of a 'chocolaty' paste), carving (low relief), composition (single scene placed within partially broken cartouches), and the placement of hieroglyphic texts (in diagonal, and occasionally vertical, bands opposite the imagery).

In 1996, Traci Ardren expanded on Coe's (1973) and Tate's (1985) work. She suggested that the Chocholá style acted as part of the slateware tradition characteristic of

[106] Coe (1973: 113, 114, 116, 121-123, 126) clearly acknowledged the common use of burnishing and cinnabar; he repeatedly mentioned these two elements in remarks associated with individual vessels, although no reference to either is included in the overarching comment he made regarding the style as a whole.

Late Classic pottery production in the Yucatán Peninsula (Ardren 1996: 239).[107] The paste, she added, is a "fine carbonate-tempered clay," which may be connected with northern paste sources reserved for the elite (Ardren 1996: 238).[108] Ardren (1996: 238), like Tate, emphasized the high concentration of hemispherical bowls in the Chocholá corpus, while acknowledging the occurrence of beakers and cylinders. Furthermore, Ardren (1996: 237) called attention to the application of stucco in a few examples and the standard use of high relief.

Thus, the published definition outlines several basic aspects of the Chocholá style:

1. General paste type
    a. A 'fine carbonate-tempered' paste, extremely uniform in nature
    b. High variability in paste color
        i. 'Chocolaty' brown with variations ranging from yellow to dark brown or even black
        ii. Greenish and reddish tinges also observed (Ardren 1996: 238)
    c. Probably a Slateware type, as yet unidentified specifically
        i. Possibly Thin Slateware
        ii. Apparently the "same clay from which most Yucatecan elite wares are made" (Ardren 1996: 238)
2. Form
    a. Standard (for both representative and atypical forms, see Table 2):
        i. Hemispherical bowls with no base
    b. Less typical (but repeated frequently enough to be part of the standard range of deviation):
        i. Beakers with no base
        ii. Cylinders with no base
3. Height
    a. Usually restricted to approximately 10 to 15cm., although vessels in the cylindrical form, for example, can be considerably taller
4. Surface decoration
    a. Imagery (always included)
        i. Relief carving instead of incising

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[107] Ardren, following Brainerd (1958: 234), also proposed the possibility of a thin slateware category including Chocholá products.

[108] Ardren (2008, pers. comm.) reached this conclusion after having examined many Chocholá ceramics and other slatewares in person. What she saw led her to agree with Brainerd's (1958) assessment of the paste and production process, which she noted is of high quality, contains few inclusions and exhibits a sophisticated approach to surface treatment.

ii. Figures or shapes incorporated into, and often breaking the boundaries of a framing cartouche

b. Post-fire or 'trickle' paint additions[109]

5. Hieroglyphic texts (sometimes included)
   a. Vertical text opposite the image
   b. Diagonal text opposite the image
   c. Rim band (Ardren 1996: 243)[110]

The current stylistic definition of Chocholá ceramics is limited in the following ways. Vagueness characterizes several of the guidelines for inclusion: does imagery always have to be incorporated, for example, and can the relationship between the scene panel(s) and vessel wall be more fully codified? Additionally, scholars have emphasized depth of carving at the expense of other characteristic aesthetic elements. While previous investigators have described the basic image style, diagnostic features helpful in identification have yet to be fully examined. My own analysis, as I argue below, indicates that Chocholá artists followed a definable set of loose rules that governed aesthetics, including the relationship between the carved and uncarved areas of the vessel. Additionally, continued archaeological activity in the north has resulted in more representative ceramic samplings that include Chocholá pieces, thus expanding the current corpus and allowing greater clarity in identifying an overarching style, sub-styles and related traditions.[111] Finally, previous definitions also do little to incorporate an important aspect of the style, namely the hieroglyphic inscriptions. Grube (1990), García Campillo (1992), Green (1997) and Velázquez Valadés (et al. 2005) and colleagues have discussed the importance and prevalence of rim band texts, thus adding a central set of diagnostic elements. In considering the textual phrases found on Chocholá vessels, I emphasize paleography and spelling conventions in order to clarify how text bands and individual hieroglyphs can function as characteristic inclusions. Applying a stylistic

[109] See Brainerd (1958: 76) and Ardren (1996: 240) for the use of the term 'trickle' paint.
[110] Tate (1985: 125) would place the vessels with rim bands in a different category altogether, completely separate from, although related to, the Chocholá style.
[111] Both Tate (1985) and Ardren (1996) rightfully avoided the danger of classing all carved, Yucatecan pottery as Chocholá by being conservative in establishing their respective corpuses. Now, however, expanded archaeological evidence allows the inclusion of additional ceramics.

perspective to such inscriptions can also expand the current corpus to include vessels not previously considered. Before delving directly into such detailed stylistic discussions, I would like to first explain the methodology I use. The rubric I develop in this chapter is specifically geared towards the individual identification or exclusion of particular pieces in relation to the larger Chocholá stylistic umbrella. As such, I do not emphasize the communicative role often held by style or the possible reasons behind stylistic interchange although I will conclude with some remarks regarding such conceptual issues as they relate to the Chocholá vessels.

### *A Methodology of Style*

In order to discuss the specifics of style it is prudent to first establish a basic understanding of the term's meaning. Generally, art historians, archaeologists and anthropologists agree on two basic, underlying principles: 1. Style resides in appearance and reflects a repeated manner of doing something and 2. Style is culturally, temporally and geographically specific and can include a particular "'life-style' or the 'style of a civilization'" (Schapiro 1953: 287).[112] Thus, while the exact nature of particular stylistic expression has been debated, the two elements—formal properties and the ability to connect these properties with a specific creator, group, or area—act as the foundations of stylistic analysis. Indeed, they form the underlying principles that not only allow stylistic investigation but also clearly connect it with the art historical realm.

In fact, as Donald Preziosi (1998: 582) has remarked, initially at least, "the entire possibility of art history as a discipline rests upon the stylistic hypothesis." Art historians first recognize style by identifying repeated, characteristic and therefore diagnostic elements that function as culturally specific "laws" or norms governing image production

[112] Preziosi's (1998: 582), Ackerman's (1991: 3), Schapiro's (1953: 287), Sackett's (1977: 370), Shanks and Tilley's (1992) and Shanks' (1999: 18) comments are representative of art historical, anthropological and archaeological definitions of the term (see also Conkey and Hastorf 1990).

(Gombrich 1968: 150; Wölfflin 1950: 17).[113] The artistic process involves selecting certain ways of doing things out of a pool of almost infinite possibilities; "style forbids certain moves and recommends others as effective, but the degree of latitude left to the individual within this system varies…" (Gombrich 1968: 162). Interpretation follows identification, at which point structuralist, Marxist, feminist or other techniques may be used to implicate meaning.[114] Paralleling art historical approaches, archaeological and anthropological studies highlight style as a way of first codifying and restricting analysis to objects sharing similarities.[115] Identifying the choices made during the production and/or use of like objects helps develop a (partial) understanding of the culture within which they were created (see Binford 1962; Dunnell 1978; Hodder 1979; Plog 1983; Sackett 1977, 1982; Wobst 1977, to name a few).[116] The classificatory approach is at once necessary while at the same time functioning as an incomplete reconstruction of the past, especially since modern categories are often quite different from those developed in antiquity.[117]

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[113] The forger provides an interesting caveat. According to these definitions of style, a forger's culture would affect the copying of past works. It is certainly extremely probable, however, that many forgeries continue to exist today, though they are unrecognized as such (Gombrich 1968: 163). Gombrich (1968: 163), however, chooses to see this issue in a positive light, because to him, it shows that style is knowable and identifiable, even from outside the culture within which it was created—does the work "look right?"

[114] Some theoretical perspectives have a grounding in the Western tradition, however, and require additional development before they can be successfully applied to ancient societies, especially non-Western ones.

[115] Art historians, anthropologists and archaeologists alike have also often used style as a chronological marker although many scholars now call attention to the problems inherent in temporal comparisons (see Plog's [1983: 133] and Kubler's [1962: 120] discussions of this issue in relation to stylistic variability and multiplicity).

[116] Just as the material record is a partial representation of a past culture, so too is the reconstruction of the choices resulting in the forms found in that record.

[117] Simply compare and contrast the Maya classifications of vessel form—cup, plate, etc.—with the extended type-variety system of organizing ceramic material found in most modern ceramic reports (see Brainerd 1958; Gifford 1976).

The idea that culture is somehow inherent in style (or visa versa) has received wide acceptance in various fields, including art history, anthropology and archaeology.[118] Early anthropological studies recognized but did not discuss the sense of agency associated with art making because the exact identity of the artist is (usually) unknown in archaeological examples (see Binford 1962; Gell 1998: 157-158). More recently, however, scholars have argued for an increased awareness of such agency; art is made by someone, for someone (see Gombrich 1968: 162; Kubler 1962: 22, 34, 46; Shanks 1999: 16; Shanks and Tilley 1992: 147; Summers 1989: 373-374). The art object can also be seen as transmitting a specific message within the community in which it was created.[119]

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[118] In fact, as Alfred Gell (1998: 162) argued, the very term 'style' relies on this interrelationship:

> Is any given artwork, in a given style (personal or collective), related by synecdoche to *all* the artworks in that style? The answer to this is surely 'yes'—because we have unearthed one of the basic implications of the word 'style', namely, that style attributes enable individual artworks to be subsumed into the class of artworks which share these particular attributes. Consequently, any given artwork 'exemplifies' the stylistic canons of the tradition of material culture from which it originates; it 'stands for' this style.

Gell (1998: 167) also noted, "Once…axes of coherence have been identified, it then becomes possible to understand the cognitive significance of a 'cultural' style in rendering features of the culture cognitively salient." Furthermore, Shanks and Tilley (1992: 152-153) argue that this relationship between part and whole is a dialectical one, in which the individual work influences and is influenced by the macrocosm of culture, causing "'conceptualization,' 'representation,' and 'misrepresentation'."

[119] This does, of course, raise the question of what art is. Such a question is particularly pertinent when dealing with cultures for which the modern term 'art' had no meaning. Certainly one cannot say that art is that which serves no function. The very objects of concern here are pots that would have been used for drinking, a very concrete function. Because of their status as elite luxury items, they would have been especially visible during ceremonial occasions and the stylistic features that will be identified at the end of this chapter relate to this particular contextual function, of which the scholar should always maintain awareness, as has been noted (Kubler 1962: 126). Different classes of items, for instance, may be connected with different meanings due, in part, to greater or lesser visibility (Plog 1983: 138). The term 'art' can also not be restricted to include only objects that contain imagery. In the sense in which I use the term here, for example, a Wedgwood vase would be considered art. In other words, art may be anything that holds value that goes beyond, or complements, a pure utilitarian function. This may occur in a

The acknowledgment of agents within the ancient record allows for intentionality on the part of the artist/patron and the awareness that the message, in turn, relates to the specific social, political, economic and/or religious concerns of the patron/artist.[120] Furthermore, not only would the artist simply not be able to conceive of a work that was wholly innovative/original/unique, the receiver would not be able to interpret the object and the item would become useless (Ackerman 1991: 5).[121] Shanks and Tilley (1992: 147) are particularly explicit regarding the individual and his or her relation to culture:

> The artist is a material agent acting in a particular time and place under social conditions and constraints he or she has not created, and located in relation to social contradictions which, by definition, cannot be individually controlled…. Hence artistic practice is situated practice—the mediation of aesthetic codes, values and ideologies.

Thus particular social settings are imposed on and influence artists as cultural actors, although we might add that, as elites, Maya artists also controlled such contexts to a certain degree. Just as importantly, however, the work of art then requires a repositioning of society; in other words, art can serve an ideological, communicative function and thus

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variety of ways—a particular form of vase, technical superiority of craftsmanship, and so on; imagery is not the only inclusion that can result in an 'art' label. Furthermore, as Panofsky (1995b: 120) states,

> If commercial art be defined as all art not primarily produced in order to gratify the creative urge of its maker but primarily intended to meet the requirements of a patron or a buying public, it must be said that noncommercial art is the exception rather than the rule, and a fairly recent and not always felicitous exception at that.

[120] Reluctance to explicitly mention individual producers since they can never be specifically identified could lead to a more emphatically active role for artifacts. As Gell (1998: 220), in dealing with art and agency, stated, "Artworks are like social agents, in that they are the outcome of social initiatives which reflect a specific, socially inculcated sensibility." See also Shanks' (1999: 18) comments regarding the artifact as both signifier and signified: "the artifact as signifier and signified is the creation of a social term, and then its distribution/exchange, and consumption," both as "simple use" and as a dialectical part of an "object world." Thus, according to Shanks, not only can the vessel not be separated from its maker, neither can the two be disconnected from their social setting and other contexts of production.

[121] There should be some kind of identifiable congruencies in the relationship between the different sections of the work of art; if consistency is lacking, the same result—uselessness—is reached (Gell 1998: 162).

influence society through its reception.[122] Indeed, as Shanks (1999: 18) suggests, "style is the means by which objects are constituted as social forms."

Within this schema, it is tempting to see the investigator as an objective entity, at least during the initial stage, because he or she merely identifies traits. Since each individual scholar can never be fully objective, we must maintain a critical awareness of the *reconstructed* or even *constructed* social context (Shanks and Tilley 1992: 12, 28; Summers 1989: 381, 386-387).[123] First, an individual artistic producer creates a work of art that dialectically responds to its context and is thus both governed by and "constructs social reality" (Shanks and Tilley 1992: 148. 152). Furthermore, due in part to these dialectics, as Kubler (1985 [1979]: 420) indicates, style behaves in a "synchronic" rather than "diachronic" fashion, which is to say that it "consist[s] of acts undergoing change." Then the scholar (an individual also influenced by his or her own cultural contexts) interprets the artifact—an impartial, shifting record of the social situation—and in doing so creates his or her own re-construction of the previous construction (Shanks 1999: 15; Shanks and Tilley 1992: 148).[124]

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[122] In Shanks and Tilley's (1992: 149, 152, emphasis in original) view, the artist must be described as a "*producer*" rather than a "*creator*" because of his (or her) role as mediator. I argue that the process of mediation is, in itself, a creative one, however, and I use the two terms interchangeably (see footnotes 123 and 124).

While of no lesser importance, art created solely for the benefit of the artist is not of interest here. One could argue that it held a communicative role for the producer, but if that role were restricted to self-reflection alone, the art object would thus not have as direct an effect on the cultural superstructure even though it, by its very nature, reflects that superstructure.

[123] "Imaginative reconstruction" in Shanks and Tilley's terms; also see footnotes 122 and 124.

[124] See Kubler's (1962: 17-18) statements regarding the interpretation of the past; according to Kubler, the artifact was made in the past but only understood in the present: "if it is a signal it is a past action, no longer embraced by the 'now'…its impulse and its transmission happened 'then.'" It forms part of the archaeological record, which, while extensive, still remains only a partial documentation of actuality in the past (Kubler 1962: 40, 41). Again, there is no "ultimate truth;" the scholar can only try to make his or her assumptions and methodological bases transparent and thus reduce the possibility for error relating to the necessarily subjective approach (Plog 1983: 136). This is why the

The analyst is but the last in a long line of receivers, which means that the item's "afterlife" or use patterns should also be considered, including the immediate effect created by an object as well as the modification of messages over time (see Appadurai 1986; Elsner 2003: 106; Kubler 1962: 21; Plog 1983: 133, 135; Summers 1989: 393). Ancient Maya elite ceramics contributed to the communication of social status and solidification of alliances, for example, through their appearance during feasting, gift-giving and funerary rituals (see Houston, Stuart and Taube 2006: 127-129; Reents-Budet 1994: 72-99). Additionally, the longer lasting and more widespread a particular ceramic style was, the more successful it was (theoretically at least) in providing a format for the dissemination of such messages. The idea that artifacts must be interpreted in an active sense (Shanks and Tilley 1992: 98) contradicts earlier, empirical assumptions that "they are intrinsically expressive," that they can speak for themselves and/or that they can somehow be interpreted to reveal an "ultimate truth" (Elsner 2003: 105; Plog 1983: 136; Schapiro 1953: 291).

Given an emphatically image-based perspective, the art historian would logically be most capable of analyzing a particular manifestation of Maya style in order to reach broader conclusions regarding interaction and social atmosphere. Unfortunately, two of the major works that deal with Maya styles skirt any attempt to explicitly state either a definition for style or how it may be recognized. Tatiana Proskouriakoff (1950) masterfully presented Maya style as regionally and temporally specific but did not investigate the larger significance of style selection. In developing another stylistic approach, Esther Pasztory (1993) concentrated on the ideological import of stylistic choices but in doing so often merged iconographic and stylistic discussions without explicit explanation.

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social or cultural contexts referred to earlier are constructed instead of reconstructed (Shanks and Tilley 1992: 12, 28).

Since theoretical stances (e.g. feminist, Marxist and postmodern perspectives) dictate which stylistic elements are viewed as significant, they also influence that final re-construction even at the stage of identification. While each scholar's interpretation will, of course, be influenced by the culture within which he or she lives, some can be shown to 'fit' the data better than others.

Typically, analysts rigidly separate formal elements (composition, color, the quality of line, etc.) from subject matter (iconography).[125] Such a division is often necessary in order to maintain a certain degree of resolution and a focus on style without needless confusion. Archaeologically based approaches can combine the two, however. Pasztory (1993: 121), for instance, interpreted the Maya representation of *atlatls* (spear throwers) and other war implements on Tikal Stela 31 as indicating the Maya use of a central Mexican style. Thus, she identified an iconographic feature as a stylistic element in the midst of a more traditional discussion of appearance, which was inherently Maya (as Pasztory acknowledged).[126] While the Tikal ruler had a specific reason for including central Mexican symbols on Stela 31 (see Cash 2005; Stuart 2002), the Maya use of such imagery was much more widespread and seems to have been connected to larger symbol sets regarding military power (Cash 2005; Pasztory 1993; Stone 1989). At first, the use of an iconographic element as stylistic seems jarring, especially when there has been no methodological discussion justifying such an approach. The awareness of larger Maya-based patterns, however, indicates that the selection of *atlatls* became a standard, repeated Maya way of representing military prowess. Therefore, the inclusion of *atlatls* becomes—like the choice of form and color—an indexical stylistic decision rather than strictly an issue of subject matter. In fact, the Maya use of iconography often reflects stylistic behavior.

The cranial modification found in Maya representations of elites provides yet another example in which it is extremely difficult to differentiate between style and

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[125] See Preziosi's (1998: 109-114) overview of art historical approaches to style. The distinction between style and iconography relates to the twofold Hegelian model, where both form (that which could be imbued with style) and (iconographic) content are seen as reflecting a bipartite historical progression. This in turn reflects the larger, age-old distinction between pure forms/ideas (of which both art and nature are but poor imitations; Plato) and the historical development of forms/content dictated by context (art as an evolutionary sequence; Hegel). In the more specific sense, though, the rigid separation between iconography and form (connected with style) is an art historical parallel to the anthropological/archaeological separation of style and function (see Binford 1962; Sackett 1982).

[126] See Gell's (1998: 159, 216) brief discussion of style and iconography. Furthermore, as Plog (1983: 134, 135) noted, great care must be taken in identifying a style as foreign.

iconography. The line circumscribing the skull can be described as receding evenly in a backward slant away from the area in front of the eyes until it ends in the depiction of hair or a headdress (fig. 45). This type of description obviously falls under the rubric of identifying style, emphasizing, as it does, the diagnostic quality of line. Yet when this use of style results in the term cranial modification, it enters inexorably into the realm of iconography through the labeling of an iconographic trait—the re-formed skull. In this case, the distortion of the cranium is an image that indicates status (and can even be considered fashionable; Maya rulers are almost always shown with just such a forehead), on the one hand, and participation in a set of social practices associated inextricably with the Maya on the other (cranial modification was actually practiced and can be seen in human skulls retrieved during archaeological projects). Still, it is the identification of style in the iconography that allows the recognition of the iconographic trait; in other words, in this case and in many others, the detection of iconographic elements requires the use of style. As part of a general model, iconography should remain distinct from style until the analyst can demonstrate that stylistic patterns dictated the use of imagery.

Art historians are, in some ways, most qualified to conduct analyses based on iconographic and formal considerations. As David Summers (1989: 373) stated, such "analysis remains the way in which 'the work of art itself' is talked about, and if it is simply abandoned, then the history of art is placed in the paradoxical position of being unable to speak in significant ways about the objects of its peculiar concern, which is not even to mention the problems of fashioning histories of these objects." Art historians have typically ignored style in recent years, however. As Ackerman (1991: 20), in revisiting his own writings on style, stated:

> I believe that much of its message is still relevant; but neither I nor anyone else would write anything like it today. At the time the concept of style seemed central to the practice of art history; it does not seem to be so important today. The impact of structuralism, post-structuralism, neo-Marxism, feminism, and other intervening critical modes of interpretation in the humanities helped us to see other dimensions of consciousness and of social structure affecting the form and content of works of art.

Within this context, it seems that Mesoamerican art history, as a field of study, emerged while the perceived methodological usefulness of stylistic analysis waned, resulting in iconographic explorations, for example, at the expense of stylistic investigations. Summers, of course, specifically reacted to the trend Ackerman spoke of by reaffirming the centrality of style in art historical frameworks.[127] Furthermore, even as stylistic discussions begin to experience resurgence, many such investigations are not directly applicable to Precolumbian studies generally or the Maya specifically. The vast majority contains an almost exclusively Eurocentric perspective and are often too broad or too vague to provide models for the study of non-Western examples. Either the approach is so tied to a culturally (i.e. geographically and temporally) specific period as to preclude application to other times or places or such constraints are ignored in the effort to explain artistic production the world over.

Many of the early art historical approaches to style fall into the latter category and have now become outmoded, like the oppositional sets such as painterly versus linear that Wölfflin (1950: 18-72) developed. Biases have also become evident in these early writings. Wölfflin (1950 [1932]: 15, emphasis added), for example, projected arbitrary values onto the art of classical antiquity when he stated,

> In the system of a classical composition, the single parts, however firmly they may be rooted in the whole, maintain a certain independence. It is not the *anarchy of primitive art*: the part is conditioned by the whole, and yet does not cease to have its own life.

With such a stance, Wölfflin clearly privileged European art to such an extent that other, 'primitive' traditions were belittled and perceived as less sophisticated.[128] In doing so, he applied certain concepts regarding 'proper' patterns of image rendition to areas and cultures that did not necessarily value such 'ideal' forms. When discussing ancient Egyptian and Greek art, Panofsky (1955b: 61-2, emphasis added) expressed similar

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[127] A few other art historians are also beginning to return to stylistic issues (see Elsner 2003).

[128] The very use of the term "primitive," of course, automatically denigrates the cultural production of non-Western people as somehow less 'cultured,' 'civilized,' etc. See Antliff and Leighten's (2003) discussion of the term.

preconceived notions, while adding a sense of predestined progression akin to the natural life cycle:

> The *advance* of the classical style beyond the *archaic* consisted in its accepting as *positive* artistic values precisely those factors which the Egyptians had *neglected* or *denied*. Classical Greek art took into account the shifting of the dimensions as a result of organic movement; the foreshortening resulting from the process of vision; and the *necessity* of correcting, in certain instances, the optical impression of the beholder.

Thus, in Panofsky's view, art making and, indeed, style itself, were parts of an evolutionary process. Ancient Greeks progressed, indeed 'advanced' beyond the ancient Egyptians in artistic quality, according to Panofsky, by incorporating what had been 'neglected' and 'denied' while also making 'necessary' visual corrections.

Even when such a comparative qualification is avoided, the use of terms to identify chronological periods often reflects the biological metaphor, leading to inherent value judgments and a deterministic sense of progression.[129] As Ackerman stated (1991: 8-10, emphasis in original; see also Gombrich 1968: 157; Summers 1989: 383), the scholar must be careful not to take the approach that the "earlier phase of a style is *destined* to move toward the later," but must rather attempt to view the artifact from an emic perspective.[130] A position that presents later developments as 'predestined' undermines the variability and possibility inherent in the artistic process (Ackerman 1991: 10). Several Mayanists have called attention to the fact that using terms like "Pre-Classic," "Classic," and "Late," "Terminal," or "Post Classic" as temporal markers implies a natural life cycle, where culture and art forms develop during the "Pre" phase, leading to a florescence during the "Classic," followed quickly by (cultural and artistic)

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[129] As Preziosi (1998: 111) noted, "From individual identities to national entities, from the realm of human experience to the entire planet and its biosphere, the significance of things [including works of art, has been] articulated as historical, evolutionary, developmental, and progressive."

[130] At least as emic a perspective as is possible for a twenty-first century scholar interpreting the remains of an imperfect material record.

decline and, ultimately, abandonment during the "Terminal" and "Post Classic."[131] At this stage, however, reference to an ancient Maya "Classic" period has become so entrenched in the literature that it cannot be extracted easily (see Ackerman 1991: 21). I, like others studying the Maya, reluctantly continue to use such vocabulary and join my fellow Mayanists in the conscious effort to avoid value judgments or ideas regarding a 'natural' progression.

Ridding ourselves of the sense of a predestined end result emphasizes the possibility for dialectical relationships. Artistic styles may be seen in a continuum of action/reaction or transformation (Kubler 1962: 85, 1985 [1979]; Panofsky 1995: 23; Shanks and Tilley 1992: 149; Wölfflin 1950: 14-15).[132] Meaning, the ultimate goal of any art historical analysis, necessitates an awareness of such dialogues (Kubler 1962: 13, 1985 [1979]). Any object not destroyed immediately during or after creation can be understood as 'successful' according to the culture (or cultural subset) within which it was created.[133] One of the keys to success is the way in which the different parts of the image work together to form a cohesive whole; otherwise the art object remains incomplete.[134]

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[131] See Kubler (1962: 5) and Pasztory (1993: 113, 117). The field of Maya studies is not unique in this respect. While art historians did not specifically introduce such terminology into discussions of Maya history, similar words have been (and are still) used in the field to classify ancient Greek and Roman production (see Stokstad 2002), indicating an interdisciplinary problem in temporal classifications.

[132] As Ackerman (1991: 4, emphasis in original) has noted, "The virtue of the concept of style is that by defining *relationships* it makes various kinds of order out of what otherwise would be a vast continuum of self-sufficient products."

[133] In this case, 'success' is used to refer to the fact that the object was apparently sufficiently in accord with the goals of its creator and/or patron that it was allowed to exist. Whether the message it was expected to disseminate was actually received successfully is another question that requires investigation, especially during times of stress or in cases of distance. Of course, when dealing with the ancient material record, one cannot say that the inverse—those objects that were destroyed were unsuccessful—is true.

[134] Of course, geographically and temporally disparate cultures may have different definitions for when an object is completed. In modern society, one exception might be the art of children, maintained, with loving care, by their parents. Many of these works would not be considered 'fine' or 'high' art by most (although these terms are, in themselves, coming into question, as the development of the art quilt and its display in

Were the historian simply to consider a single object in a vacuum, style could be defined for that object but its significance would remain patently obscure since the scholar would not then be able to discuss how the work related to tradition, social commentary, etc.[135]

Proportionality acts as a particularly sensitive indicator, reflecting shifts in traditions of representation, as Panofsky (1955b: 56) noted:

> The history of the theory of proportions is the reflection of the history of style…. One might assert that the theory of proportions expresses the frequently perplexing concept of the *Kunstwollen* [the "artistic intention" of a particular time/place] in clearer or, at least, more definable fashion than art itself.

With the early twentieth century filter favoring extremely lifelike representations removed, Panofsky's (1955b: 56) discussion of figural proportions as stylistic is insightful. When looking at figural forms within a specific class of objects, the styles associated with the representation of characters may be compared with one another, not with the aim of arriving at a qualitative judgment, but rather in the interests of understanding artistic concepts regarding image production and identifying shifts or changes in that conception.[136] The ancient Maya usually represented figures based on a

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museums indicates, thus effectively blurring the distinction between 'high' and 'low' art, 'fine' art and 'craft'), yet not all drawings or artworks created by a given child are kept, only those that are viewed as particularly 'special' or 'finished.' In most cases, such works would not be viewed as great masterpieces or as particularly noteworthy to anyone but the child, the parents and family friends—exactly that cultural subset for which the image holds meaning. Another exception would be the preparatory drawings of an already acknowledged great, like Michelangelo. These are, admittedly, unfinished in the traditional sense, although many lovers of Michelangelo would argue for the perfection of forms, line, etc. within the fragmentary works. Furthermore, neither Michelangelo nor his contemporaries would have considered them 'art' in the same sense with which I am using the term here (see also footnote 119), but rather a tool to aid in the creation of 'real' artworks.

[135] As Norman Bryson (2001) points out, in introducing Mieke Bal's (2001) linguistically-based approach to art historical analysis, meaning/communication occurs in the interchange—taking a more dialectical form than a simple, linear object-subject relationship—between the viewer and that which is viewed. It is thus inherently contextually based and changes over time and from viewer to viewer.

[136] While value judgments are clearly not successful in scholarly work, a contextual (or emic) sense of quality can be helpful. Late/Terminal Classic Maya artists

believable system of proportions and body mechanics. In some cases, the artists chose to create such a specific vision that individual likenesses can be identified (see Griffin 1976; Schele and Miller 1986: 66; Spencer 2007). Additionally, in depictions of high-class individuals the Maya occasionally manipulated other figures, like captives, for humorous effect. Representations of such characters were often not as rigidly constrained as those depicting more important people. Take, for example, the different figural conventions that appear on a polychrome vessel (fig. 46). Here, a rare, full frontal visage is presented to the viewer; the wild hair, dour expression and frontal depiction contrast with, and act as a foil for, the elites also included in the image. Thus, through the differences in the way individual figures are presented, the viewer at once understands relative importance (the lord, raised on a dais and represented with a dignified profile, versus the non-elite prisoner who crouches before the throne and looks out at the viewer). Additionally, the disproportionately large head of the front-facing captive and the fact that all three detainees were rendered without necks contrasts with the lifelike depiction of the surrounding elites' proportions. Further alterations in figure type—compact versus elongated body proportions, for instance—across examples can also imply multiple centers of production. Thus, Panofsky's discussion of proportions as key stylistic elements seems to be applicable, in a general sense at least, to Maya representational modes.

Anthropological and archaeological approaches have emphasized that techniques of manufacture act as stylistic processes as well.[137] Technical information (e.g. paste type, color, shape and surface decoration) can indicate placement in a particular ceramic

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overwhelmingly favored a new technological development—the slateware type. Modern analysts have shown that slatewares were less prone to breakage, among other things, and this very quality, in combination with other desirable traits, resulted in their widespread manufacture and distribution (see Varela Torrecilla 1992, 1998). This consideration of quality, based on context, rejects any subjective assumptions on the part of the scholar regarding 'value' or the natural progression of things.

[137] Consider the widespread use of the type-variety method of grouping Maya ceramics (see Gifford 1976: 4-5).

tradition in contrast to other ceramic styles.[138] Anthropologists have convincingly demonstrated that technical style can be used in an ideological fashion. Lemonnier (1986), for example, investigated group identity among the Anga through his survey of pig trap forms. Several Anga groups lived in close proximity to one another but Lemonnier (1986) found that one group chose to use a different type, or style, of pig trap despite the awareness of the other, equally effective traps used in neighboring areas. Knowledge of 'other' styles existed, yet the groups 'forgot' the exact techniques in question as it suited their purposes of self-differentiation. Thus, like image-based styles, technical styles can be both conscious (selecting a particular type of pig trap) and unconscious (using wood to construct the trap), both of which convey information to the viewer at some level.

Art historical, anthropological and archaeological approaches can offer complementary methods for looking at both formal elements and appearance as a way of elucidating messages regarding group affiliation. Differing levels of emphasis can be seen in the distinction Gombrich (1968: 151) made between style and stylishness. 'Stylishness' refers to a particular aspect of cultural life generally popular within the society in which it appears (i.e. 1980s bellbottoms and beehive hairdos). Thus, stylishness acts as a more specific, highly conscious manifestation, and indeed projection, of style (in the 1980s, for instance, bellbottoms were 'stylish' while generic blue jeans did not carry the same 'hip' associations, despite the fact that both were often made of the same material and can be classified as pants worn in late twentieth century America). Art historians certainly consider clothing and other aspects of appearance when analyzing works of art but anthropologists in particular have emphasized the idea that such items can exhibit style specifically through stylishness and thus send messages regarding group affiliation. A particular type or cut of clothing becomes popular and then represents a repeated manner of doing (or wearing) something (see styles of clothing, Wobst 1977).

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[138] As always, these categories are constructed by modern scholars and do not necessarily reflect ancient groups. The ancient categories are often much harder to discuss and recognize; the ancient Maya, for example, only classified vessels according to form/shape (i.e. cup vs. plate) in written accounts (see Boot 2005; Houston, Stuart and Taube 1989).

While stylishness represents "fluctuating preferences which carry social prestige," in some cases the lack of fluctuation was equally important (Gombrich 1968: 151).[139] Maya cranial modification, for instance, was a mark of elite status. Since a baby's head would need to be bound in order to reach the desired shape, such class indications could not be faked.[140] Thus, the modification of the skull acted as a permanent display of social status separating high-class individuals from commoners and, even more importantly with respect to iconographic representations, from 'foreigners.'[141]

Stylishness could also be indicated through the standardized hieroglyphic dedicatory formula appearing on many Maya ceramics and functioning, in a larger sense, to mark elite status, literacy and access to resources. The prevalence of such tags in the Chocholá corpus requires a multi-dimensional understanding of style. Scholars must use different analytic approaches when considering the way the writing "looks" as opposed to what it says.[142] In order to discuss the characteristic use of certain terms, phrases or titles, and their ordering, I refer to 'language-based styles.' By contrast, I use the term 'writing style' when discussing differences in the appearance of ancient Maya script—the Maya equivalent of handwriting.

While any speaker or writer faces numerous choices when constructing and verbalizing thoughts, certain turns of phrase have become so connected with particular cultural moments that their subsequent use within that culture immediately recalls and/or comments on the initial occurrence (e.g. "read my lips" and "just say 'no'" in present-day America). Writing styles have just as immediate an impact: many word processing

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[139] While iconography and style are often rigidly separated during analysis, in this case iconography frequently nestles within style. For other instances where style and iconography may be combined for analytic purposes, see my earlier discussion of Pasztory's (1993) approach to Maya style.

[140] Many examples of what could be considered stylish rest firmly on restriction, tradition and socially prescribed roles (in contrast to the fads that wink in and out of existence in today's Western-based cultures).

[141] See Tozzer (1966 [1941]: 125) and Adams (1971: 51).

[142] Even though art historians frequently analyze signatures and other aspects of writing, only a few scholars have explicitly acknowledged the possibilities of a language- or writing-based style (see Gombrich 1968: 152, for example).

programs offer a font called 'Gothic' that refers to the past through a loose visual connection to medieval manuscript illumination, just as 'Kid Print' looks like a (stylized) version of a child's handwriting.

A brief consideration of another non-Western approach to image and text—the Chinese colophon—demonstrates the richness of analysis possible. Chinese calligraphy has long been recognized as inherently expressive while it is also seen as adding intrinsic value and status when included on painted scrolls. Written words in this case function as an art form in and of themselves, which complements and augments (or at least has the potential to complement and augment) the image-based portion of the art object (when images are included). Certainly the actual text was significant and critiqued with an eye to poetic and lyrical turns of phrase, but the very way the words *looked* was also important (see Chung-yuan 1963). A full stylistic analysis of a Chinese scroll, then, must consider the appearance of the image, what the text says and how it looks.

Not only are such textual manifestations of style often overlooked, the relationship between text and image is also frequently neglected. As Kubler (1985 [1979]: 421) has indicated, artistic selection of "formats" (and the inherent interrelationships that compose any particular format) also behaves stylistically. Works that combine text and image are but the most obvious examples of such formatting. Indeed, while the combination of words and visual details remains understudied, a few investigations of both modern and ancient traditions prove the exception. Pre-Raphaelite scholars, for instance, have investigated the relationship between text and image due to the frequent, intentional alignment and interconnection that Pre-Raphaelite images had with popular literature of the time (Pearce 1991). Several Pre-Raphaelite artists even went so far as to have lines of poetry carved on the frames of their images.[143] Analysis of Modern and Postmodern imagery has also resulted in some discussion of the relationship between text and image; Linda Hutcheon (1989), for instance, considers the postmodern tension in Barbara Kruger's combination of words and photographs.

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[143] Sir John Everett Millais' *Mariana*, of 1852, is but one example. Millais was influenced by Alfred Lloyd Tennyson and chose to include lines from Tennyson's "Mariana" on the frame.

Medieval manuscripts and ancient Maya visual/textual programs provide yet more examples; text and image are often intimately connected in both cases. In the manuscript tradition, medieval scribes highlighted certain words and connected them with images found in the margins by placing small colored marks next to each, while Maya scribes could use parts of the image to break or touch relevant passages in the textual frame. Mayanists have made several attempts to discuss the exact nature of the relationship between text and image but have usually limited themselves to the following, rather simple question: does the image illustrate the text?[144] Obviously a much more nuanced discussion can be developed in connection with both of the individual components—the text and the image—and their interrelationship. A stylistic point of view has the potential to add as yet unconsidered dimensions to this discussion.

A perspective privileging textual patterns would require that consideration not only of image styles but also of textual styles and uses of language as stylistic components precede an analysis of the interrelationship between words and pictures. The exact (literal) visual link (or lack thereof) between strings of words and scenes then has the potential to demonstrate a characteristic, repeated (and thus stylistically diagnostic) manner of approaching image production. Closer considerations of language style can also lead to greater regional specificity. Even in the highly standardized dedicatory formula appearing on Maya pots, texts from northern Yucatán exhibit key differences when compared to those from the Petén area with the possibility for even further site-based specificity (see García Campillo 1992; Grube 2000; Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005; see also Chapters 5, 6).

Considering language and writing styles in conjunction with image-based styles enables the identification of particular artists' hands as well. Art history again provides an exceptionally useful framework given its early connection with connoisseurship, which was aimed precisely at recognizing the work of individual artists. Bernard Berenson (1914), Giovanni Morelli (1900) and others argued that the investigator should

[144] Please see Arthur Miller's (1989a) comments on scholarly approaches to the Maya use of text and image.

concentrate on minute visual details that do not receive the artist's direct attention; these elements are most likely to be drawn (or carved, painted, etc.) from habit and to reflect individual motor skills that, while small, can still be differentiated from the work of others.[145]

The same can be said for writing. The Maya ceramic dedicatory formulae were, for example, heavily rule governed and made select statements regarding each vessel and/or its owner/patron. The hieroglyphic blocks that form such text strings are also pictorial in nature. As with imagery, scribes inherited their knowledge of the written tradition and its application is subject to individual variation. The overarching structure shared by most ceramic texts indicates that their rendition was more rigidly circumscribed than that associated with iconography, however. Thus, the dedicatory formula is especially likely to provide the kind of detail-oriented variation within a standardized context that is necessary for recognizing individual artists (see Chapters 4 and 5 for the identification of hands).[146] The problem, of course, with such studies resides in the identification of the details that provide significant, individualized information as opposed to those that are shared by a larger body of objects. Just how can the scholar identify individual expression within the larger textual tradition? Unfortunately, the answer to this question can never be securely or categorically stated but must instead be demonstrated in each individual case.[147]

As James Whitely (1991: 16) has carefully pointed out, the scholar, when attempting to identify the products of particular individuals, should make every effort to avoid Western conceptions regarding artistic genius and the concomitant desire to create

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[145] Berenson (1914: 129, 134-135) and Morelli (1900: 77) place particular emphasis on the rendition of ears and hands.

[146] Some preliminary research has been done in this area. Justin and Barbara Kerr (1988) have applied connoisseurship to the study of Maya polychrome vessels and have successfully identified several different artists. Marc van Stone (2001) and Stephen Houston (2008) have also recently identified multiple hands in the monumental hieroglyphic record.

[147] See Whitely's (1991: 17) criticisms of the application of connoisseurship as regionally and temporally specific.

an individual style in order to garner recognition and establish a reputation.[148] This is particularly true for those cultures that do not seem to emphasize individual artistic expression, as demonstrated for the Maya generally and Chocholá artists specifically by the sparing use of scribal signatures. Whitely (1991: 17) particularly takes exception to what he sees as a necessary division in connoisseurship between the individual and his/her social context: "In treating the tradition of craftsmanship as autonomous, as one of artists being affected solely by other artists, they [Coldstream (1968) and Davison (1961)] have disentangled the individual from the society in which he was enmeshed. The demands of the society around are given scant consideration." Unlike the goals Whitely critiques, my aim in attributing individual pieces to particular hands arises from the desire to further contextualize the Chocholá style. I see the artist and his/her associated production as but one part of a larger cultural whole and only identify individual hands in order to develop a better understanding of the mechanics of production. As such, I try to make the reasons behind my attributions as transparent as possible. Furthermore, I use such work, not in the effort to elucidate individual artistic dialogues and/or 'genius,' but rather as a way of discussing particular potting communities and the patronage of distinct centers. As I show, several potting groups, identified both through the recognition of individual hands and the pressures exerted on those hands by site-specific scribal traditions, created similar luxury goods within the sociopolitical schema of exchange and interaction. The potters and their patrons thereby manifested/modified/created implied alignments between diverse centers that functioned at a social level.

As the foregoing discussion indicates, while many different art historical methodologies exist relating to style, each is restrictive, either by dealing with too broad or too narrow a spectrum. Prior scholarship has been inhibited by the incorporation of

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[148] In calling attention to such biases, Whitely's (1991: 16) statements parallel mine concerning Wölfflin's and Panofsky's approaches. Whitely also critiques the subjective approach of connoisseur-based studies. The identification of individual hands, just like the "scientific" identification of pottery styles in archaeological reports, must be subjective as it is a partial "retranslation" of the past, to use Whitely's (1991: 15) words.

unnecessary value-based assumptions, and/or the lack of attention paid to certain aspects of style not traditionally associated solely with images. Moving beyond simple formal analysis yields greater insights regarding Chocholá ceramics. Some elements, like language/writing and technical styles, provide important tools for defining the Chocholá corpus. Others, like 'stylishness,' will contribute to a contextual understanding of such vessels within the larger continuum of Maya ceramics and, indeed, image production in general (see my concluding comments and Chapter 5).

I try to avoid the kinds of pitfalls discussed thus far in applying my own methodology. I define the Chocholá style in such a way that particular carved vessels can be either excluded or included by considering diagnostic features based on a developed rubric. In adopting this holistic approach I also use style to identify individual hands and posit scribal schools in the Chocholá record (see Chapters 4, 5). I ultimately combine such considerations with context, which allows me to suggest regional variation caused by different centers of production (see Chapter 6). These stylistic characteristics also afford further interpretation of sociopolitical interrelationships, image tropes and ceramic traditions as greater levels of specificity in analysis are reached (see Chapters 6, 7). Thus, I use the methodology developed here to clearly define the Chocholá style and it continues to inform the rest of my work.

## *The Chocholá Style Defined: The Canonical Style*

I would like to preface my comments on the nature of the Chocholá style by noting that none of the individual attributes I discuss can be used in isolation as *the* identifying or diagnostic characteristic. Indeed, this is to be expected, given "the composite nature of every imaginable class as a bundle of durations" (cited in Kubler 1985 [1979]: 420). Thus, it is the convergence of a constellation of elements that informs the style and, conversely, no one vessel is likely to display all the visual characteristics discussed below. While the Chocholá grouping reflects a repetitive manner of doing

something, we must remain cognizant of the degree of variability inherent in the choices the individual artist made in producing each unique construction. Even the great depth of carving mentioned by Coe (1973), Tate (1985) and Ardren (1996), while by far the most common trait, is not seen in all examples, as will become clear when sub-styles are considered. Additionally, some elements act as more sensitive indicators than others. While most Chocholá pots seem to be part of the slateware tradition, for instance, acknowledging a pot as a slateware certainly does not necessarily make it Chocholá. The converse is also true; identifying a vessel as Chocholá does not necessarily indicate that it is also a slateware although that is likely the case. I therefore work my way from more ordinary elements to attributes that are more exclusive in nature.

There are many aspects of the Chocholá style that simply indicate its temporal (Late Classic) and geographic (northern Yucatán Peninsula/Puuc area) location. Some of the stylistic behavior already identified by Coe (1973), Tate (1985) and Ardren (1996) can be linked to this broader construct. The repetitive (and restricted) use of only a few vessel types, combined with the quality and texture of the paste and the burnishing and trickle paint additions noted by these scholars, reflect the specific manufacturing and artistic techniques that developed during the Late Classic in connection with the slateware tradition (Varela Torrecilla 1992). Even the emphasis that Coe (1973: 114), followed by Tate (1985: 124), placed on the dark brown paste color is not much help in excluding or including individual examples. Many Chocholá vessels are 'chocolaty' in color, but an expanded corpus exhibits substantial variation. The paste hue can range, for instance, from a dark pinkish red/purple (fig. 47), to a bright orange (fig. 16), to a deep brown (figs. 2, 23) and can even have hints of green and yellow (figs. 4, 24).[149] From a chemical perspective, testing the paste across vessels yielded similar results. General parallels between the samples were found, just as the vessels themselves tend to have a dark brown color, but these chemical congruencies probably only "indicate their common

[149] In defining the style, I provide figures that demonstrate particularly obvious instances of the elements in question. I have not provided an exhaustive listing of examples displaying the attributes under consideration as such a process would become cumbersome.

origin in the Puuc" area (Dorie Reents-Budet 2008, pers. comm.). Such a lack of specificity points to one key aspect: the Chocholá style must be identified as exactly that, a style, rather than a type in the type-variety classificatory system used by archaeologists to categorize ancient Maya pottery. In fact, the Chocholá system of forms seems to crosscut many different types and varieties within the current classification system (Peter Schmidt 2006, pers. comm.).[150]

I would now like to turn to the corpus itself in order to further consider key attributes and their variation, particularly in relation to the formatting of the imagery and text. Before I begin discussing stylistic variation and sub-groups, the canonical Chocholá style must be clearly defined.[151] The creation of a comprehensive model for this core grouping, and for the style as a whole, begins with technical patterns of production—the basic method(s) used to create the iconographic and hieroglyphic inclusions. The canonical style always exhibits imagery, which can be arranged in either one or two scene panels incorporated into the vessel wall.

The nature of the carving used to create scene panels sets Chocholá ceramics apart from larger carving and molding traditions. Both Ardren (1996) and Tate (1985) were right to call attention to the carving technique so indicative of the canonical style. As both scholars noted, Chocholá vessels exhibit some of the deepest carving found on ceramics in the Maya area and, in doing so, mimic techniques of image construction associated with monumental visual programs. The depth of the cuts may also have intentionally mirrored the visual impact associated with carved wooden bowls (a

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[150] In one case, what seems to be a plumbate type displays Chocholá characteristics (fig. 41).

[151] Here I use 'canonical,' not in the religious sense, but rather to refer to a widely accepted canon of works. The term itself is slightly problematic, however, since it implies a value-based judgment as well (a canon of literary works, a canon of great artists, the museum as canon-maker, etc.; see Hein 1994), where works in the accepted canon are somehow better than those that are excluded. I wish avoid such implications but can find no better term to describe vessels in this core group since words like 'characteristic,' 'typical' or 'basic' would also be misleading. As I expand on the existing definition, for example, I will discuss sub-styles that are representative of the larger grouping as I define it, but that are not part of the currently accepted canon of Chocholá pieces.

suggestion supported by the fact that both media share the same color palette—brown—in this case) (as Houston has suggested, in conversations with Taube [2010, pers. comm.]). Furthermore, as in the monumental record just mentioned, these ceramics contain a wide degree of variation in the depth with which the imagery is rendered; the scene is always recessed into the side of the pot and the main figure always rises from this recessed background, projecting forward to the surface of the vessel wall (see figs. 2-4, 12, 14; Grube 2001: 435). Details are then created through the use of incised and low relief lines. Low relief also occurs in the rendition of the hieroglyphic texts that often accompany, and are even occasionally incorporated into, the imagery. In ceramic terms, then, this subtractive process constitutes a nuanced use of high relief while also incorporating elements in low relief.[152]

Tate (1985: 124) argued that the carved additions were created during the leather hard phase (once the clay is no longer pliable). The use of the phrase 'leather hard' can be slightly misleading however, given that it implies that the paste was dry at the time of carving and that the carving took place in a single moment. Chocholá artists likely allowed the vessels to dry to the leather-hard stage and then rehydrated the areas designated for carving (Reents-Budet 2008, pers. comm.). This process keeps the shape of the piece constant while also allowing various line effects—hard versus soft/rounded. Re-saturating the piece more heavily would lead to a softer line with curved/rounded edges, while a lightly moistened (i.e. drier) clay surface would tend towards lines with harsher, more clearly defined, flat edges. Given that some Chocholá pieces incorporate

[152] Both Tate (1985) and Ardren (1996) acknowledged the deep carving exhibited by the style. Tate (1985: 124) designated it as low relief while Ardren (1996: 237) noted that "carving allows the deepest relief and the most control of the nuances of iconographic information." In this way, they both agreed on the technique used to create the imagery but they use different terms to describe it. I will not attempt to give measurements for characteristic depths for two reasons. First, many of the ceramics reside in private collections and are accessible only in photographic form; measurements would thus only represent part of the corpus. Second, the degree of depth varies across ceramics and while all exhibit deep carving, it is shallower in some than others (contrast fig. 2 with fig. 4, for example).

both types of line, it is quite likely that artists returned to such pots on multiple occasions before final completion.

The exact nature of such repeated patterns of modification is hard to identify. A potter could, for example, carve out a simple frame when the pot was fairly dry and then rehydrate the surface within the cartouche before creating the core image. Conversely, some carving seems to have occurred first during a period when the clay was still fairly wet; the artist would subsequently return to the vessel and retouch it in certain areas once it had reached a drier state. In any case, the visual effect of soft versus hard-edged lines results from a standardized technical process used at different stages both on the same pot and across examples. Simply contrast the soft curvature of the line demarcating the edge of the bodies and cushions in one piece (fig. 45) with the sharp edges used in creating the lines of the scene panel itself. When the edges of the frame in this example are further contrasted with the edges of the scene boundary found on another pot (fig. 19), the distinction becomes even clearer. The exaggerated rounded nature of line in a few unusual cases may also indicate that molds were rarely used to create sections of the imagery (fig. 41) and that carving predominates and is used in every example.

While Chocholá artists spent most of their time carving the image (and/or texts) into the vessel walls, they also frequently pursued further surface treatment after the carving had been completed and the vessel fired. Craftsmen used trickle or post-fire paint to create abstracted designs (often flowers) on the blank vessel walls opposite the image(s), for example (e.g. figs. 3, 67, 88). In conjunction with the abstract flower designs found on the un-carved areas, when post-fire paint was applied to parts of the image, artists could use it to highlight flowers in the iconography as well (e.g. figs. 90, 91). They further used such post-fire additions to visually emphasize the watery nature of the iconographic tropes in several cases and the fact that they chose black paint exclusively compliments such watery/underworldly associations (figs. 65, 88, 90, 91). Particularly diagnostic elements connected with individual entities were also picked out: spots on a jaguar (figs. 8, 106), for instance, or God L's black cape and the black tipped feathers in his hat (figs. 88, 90, 91). Interestingly, craftsmen almost completely restricted

their use of paint in this way to images of deities as opposed to those of historical figures. In this context, it seems the artists chose to use the painted additions to add to the ideological import of the carved imagery and to create a dialogue between image tropes (see Chapter 4).

Paint was not the only way in which Chocholá artisans chose to finish their products. Several examples indicate that, after firing, stucco was also applied to the uncarved surfaces surrounding the scene panels (fig. 4). Such stucco additions serve an aesthetic purpose. They call attention to the depth of carving exhibited in the main scene(s) by raising the level of the ground surrounding the image, thus creating an even greater separation between the image and the viewer.[153] The use of stucco results in heightened color contrast since it would have been brightly painted.[154] While all stucco additions are unfortunately fragmentary given its greater impermanence as a medium, Chocholá artists may have created further embellishments in these layers, much as they did with the trickle paint additions mentioned above.

The canonical style provides an instance where technical and artistic styles intersect. As just indicated, the iconography is carved deeply into the vessel wall, a clear example of technical style in that it is repeated and consistent. A discussion of the manner in which this area relates to the rest of the vessel, however, requires an artistic

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[153] In this way, the artist created three different layers of depth: the stuccoed vessel wall, the plane on which the figures resided and the deeply recessed background.

[154] The impermanent nature of stucco—its greater propensity for erosion when contrasted with either the pot itself, the carved details or the trickle paint—makes the frequency of its use by Chocholá craftsmen unclear. Only a few examples retain evidence of the application of stucco although it may have been a common practice. Originally I suspected that the crosshatching appearing in the carved background of some examples served a functional purpose by creating an irregular surface that stucco would stick to with greater success. With the evidence provided by several pieces (figs. 4, 45), however, it becomes clear that the stucco would have actually adhered to the blank areas of the vessel surrounding the imagery and/or hieroglyphic sequences. This particular technique further highlights the carved aesthetic of the Chocholá style by emphasizing depth and creating greater three-dimensionality as well as a visual interplay through the use of color. The stucco might have been painted in various colors but all examples display such fragmentary stucco additions that monochrome palettes only appear at the moment.

consideration of the technical aspects: the use of high relief necessitates a frame that differentiates the carved area from that which receives no engraving.[155] What, if any, artistic/aesthetic choices dictated the shape and size of the carved surface?

There are two basic, artistic variations in the Chocholá manner of distinguishing the image from the uncarved surface. First, the representation can be placed within a basically geometric frame or, second, it can appear within a cartouche.[156] In all cases, the manner of relating the scene to the vessel wall functions as the most significant aesthetic 'law' that dictates Chocholá appearance. The scene is clearly set apart from the rest of the vessel on all sides and does not touch either the rim or the base. When two panels appear on one piece, they not only 'float' on a blank ground but are also clearly separated from one another.

The geometric frame provided for the scene(s) can, itself, take a variety of forms. In most cases it takes a generally rectilinear form with a basically square or rectangular shape (fig. 48). Chocholá artists often rejected rigid geometric forms by rounding the corners of the rectangle and sometimes making the whole shape more circular or ovoid in nature (fig. 47). In a commonly used alternative, Chocholá artisans broke the straight lines of the rectilinear frame in order to incorporate inset areas as well as those that project sideways into the uncarved ground (fig. 45). The exact nature of these variations seems to relate to the type of iconography selected for presentation. Images of ballplayers (fig. 17) are often connected with the basically rectilinear style where the frame has areas that both recede from and project into the blank regions of the vessel walls. Such geometric frames can be further broken by the figures they contain (e.g. fig. 17), in a visual parallel to the way characters interact with watery/flowery cartouches in the Chocholá corpus. In contrast to the rectilinear frame, busts of young lords (fig. 49) and palace scenes (fig. 48) tend to appear in either square/rectangular, rounded

[155] Such technical concerns do not apply to molded examples, where lines or areas can be raised from the vessel surface instead of being inset; or incising, where lines are lightly pressed into the clay surface without major difference in surface levels.
[156] This enumeration only reflects the order in which I will discuss the two complementary but visually distinct techniques.

square/rectangular or ovoid frames.[157] The Chocholá approach to the geometric frame can thus usually be differentiated from other, more rigid uses of square or rectangular borders.[158]

The second basic category of frames also combines technical, artistic and iconographic styles. Instead of creating a geometric border for the image, Chocholá artists working in the canonical style more frequently chose a calligraphic frame to mark the shift between carved and uncarved surfaces (figs. 9, 12, 22, 40). As with the style generally, both high and low relief or incising occurs in these areas. Furthermore, the potters consistently used iconographic elements (flowery, waterlily or watery and even, occasionally, feathery forms) to create the cartouche bounding the figural scene(s) (e.g. fig. 9). Individuals or the things they hold commonly break these visual devices so that a diagnostic quality of interaction exists between frame and subject. Indeed, the frames often act symbolically as portals, indicating movement from one space to another, as Karl Taube (2010, pers. comm.) has pointed out (see also Chapter 4).

Quite a few ceramics combine the two basic ways of approaching the transition between the carved and uncarved areas of the vessel. One pot (fig. 47), for example, displays two scene panels. The young lord holding waterlily sprouts is set within a clear example of the basically geometric frame. The other scene panel is also set within an ovoid frame but incorporates scrolls to both the left and right, thus mimicking the cartouche found on other vessels. As is often the case with such framing elements, the scrolls are visually connected with the central figure in such a way that the viewer cannot tell if they emanate from him (or his costume) or if they simply act as a marker indicating the kind of location where the action takes place. In this case, the death eyes and the

[157] I discuss iconographic identifications in Chapter 4.

[158] Strictly rectilinear frames do occasionally appear in the Chocholá corpus; in some cases, this deviation from the more standard use of modified geometric boundaries can be connected with a particular location and the work of a single artist. One vessel (fig. 48), for example, demonstrates the use of a rigid rectangular border and can be connected not only with Jaina Island (probably) but also with a specific artist who created multiple vessels using such a frame. In other examples, the chosen iconographic motif can also require a strict rectangular frame, as in the representation of serpents (e.g. fig. 4; see also footnote 159).

water dots found on the scrolls might indicate a further effort to differentiate between the 'normal' or everyday realm inhabited by the young lord shown on the left and the underworldly/watery realm inhabited by the supernatural creature on the right. Most pots using the cartouche frame only display one scene, however, and thus cannot participate in such a nuanced differentiation of spaces.

The combination of geometric and cartouche frames is visible in some single-scene ceramics (fig. 29). The potter used elaborate scrolls in this instance and connected them with the main figure. Like the previous example with two scenes, these scrolls imply a cartouche format even though they only swirl around the sides of the figure and do not create a transitional boundary at the top of the image. In most cases, this seems to relate to the nature of the iconography chosen for the main scene. The main figure is set apart from the vessel walls on all four sides, but because such entities are human or, at the very least vaguely anthropomorphic, they tend to have a more vertical orientation, thus restricting the availability of space at the base and the rim.[159] Certain iconographic types found within the Chocholá scenes themselves do repeat, as in the use of watery symbols to mark the specific nature of the calligraphic frames. In most cases, however, such iconographic inclusions are not consistent enough in form (and thus not regular enough from a perspective where iconography is seen as stylistic in nature) to warrant further discussion here, with one important exception.

Vessels in the Chocholá style introduce a wide range of images indicating that pictorial forms typically do not fall under the purview of style in the Chocholá case. Remarkably consistent iconographic choices do appear in one group of pots within the canonical set, however, signifying the stylistic use of imagery. In a significant number of examples displaying the calligraphic type of frame, the bust of a young lord emerges from behind and interacts with its scene boundary in a characteristic, predictable manner (figs. 9, 12, 16, 50). The head of the individual always appears in profile, adorned with a

[159] Serpentine creatures provide the only exception to this general rule because they tend to have a more horizontal orientation. Rectangular shapes frame the twisting bodies of such snake-like entities, which take up a great deal of room both horizontally and vertically (fig. 4).

headdress that often sports waterlily symbolism and breaks the top of the scene boundary (see Chapter 4). The elite figure frequently leans out over his cartouche frame to emphasize the visual logic of emergence. At least one arm overlaps the scene border swirling around the face and body in many cases (fig. 50). As is usually true of the cartouche frame, the scribe marked the volutes with waterlily symbolism and/or dots signifying a watery environment. In this case, the watery frame, especially when it contains a young lord, can act as a diagnostic identifier connecting a particular vessel with the Chocholá style.

Certainly many Chocholá examples do not incorporate the young lord, who acts as a characteristic inclusion for a small group within the larger canonical category. Furthermore, not all ceramics displaying young lords are Chocholá; the isolated elite figure was a standard iconographic trope used repeatedly by Maya artists. When a series of visual attributes coalesce in the representation of the elite individual, however, they act as a marker of Chocholá production. In this case, iconographic attributes like the watery volutes that close off the space provided for the elite individual visually parallel the cartouche frames found in other canonical pieces. Within such a standardized pattern of representation, the stylistic use of iconography continues in the carving of the young lord, who appears with only chest, head and one or both arms visible. The way in which his headdress breaks the watery frame and/or is combined with it functions in a characteristic manner as well.

This concludes my discussion of the diagnostic framing and iconographic features of the canonical Chocholá style. The main aesthetic 'law' that governs ceramic production in this category rests on the relationship between scene panel and vessel wall. In all cases the imagery is clearly separated from, and 'floats' on a blank ground unconnected with either the rim or the base. Calligraphic cartouches often mark the transition between these two different spaces but geometric frames also occur with frequency. Both types of border vary within acceptable parameters and sometimes indicate a combination of the two different approaches in which they are inherently connected with one another. Iconography can also occasionally provide diagnostic

information; a young lord is sometimes placed within the calligraphic cartouche and connected with it through a prescribed set of interactions.

There are several groups of ceramics that were either ignored or actively excluded in published definitions (see Ardren 1996; Coe 1973; Tate 1985), despite the fact that they display attributes clearly connected with the style. In order to explain why such pieces may be included within the larger Chocholá grouping, I must now define several additional categories (I classify these groups as sub-styles in the sense that they all group together, along with the canonical set, under the Chocholá style umbrella). The first of these sub-styles can only be identified based on the fact that it is carved and incorporates distinctive text strings similar to those found on pots in the canonical style. A comparison between pots in the sub-style and two vessels indicative of a slightly unusual variation within the canonical grouping makes this identification particularly certain. Because the two ceramics that provide the most obvious connections between the canonical set and the sub-style I am about to define are slightly anamalous in and of themselves, I would like to first solidify their connection with the canonical style.

Coe (1973: cat. 73) published the first example (fig. 27) but did not identify it as Chocholá at that time. Grube (1990: fig. 1c) subsequently included the pot in his discussion of Chocholá hieroglyphic sequences, thus implying that it should be viewed as part of the larger group. Grube was concerned with discussing dedicatory formulae, however, and did not directly address this issue. The vessel is unusual for two reasons. First, it displays an atypical shape (see Table 2 for standard forms as well as unusual examples, this one included). As Tate (1985: 124) and Ardren (1996: 238) have already noted, hemispherical bowls, beakers and cylinders with no base are the most common vessel types. The person who created this example took the hemispherical bowl shape and modified it so that the rim, in conjunction with a rim text, changes direction sharply and juts outward at a diagonal instead of the softer outward curve typically found in the canonical Chocholá style (especially on ceramics containing no rim band). The basic form remains the same. It has simply been modified to accommodate text by creating a more emphatic articulation between the body and lip of the vessel.

This pot is also unusual in that its non-scene areas exhibit carving. Most Chocholá vessels (even those containing two scenes), have image-based panel(s) carved into blank grounds. In this case, however, the artist chose to fill the areas between the scenes with visual elements by incorporating large Xs placed on a background of smaller squares containing dots. The scenes themselves are set apart from the vessel walls through the use of the rectilinear frames so common in the canonical style, although the square frame employed in this case does not receive characteristic emphasis due to the additional carved elements that appear between scenes. Furthermore, the imagery—a young lord in one scene and a supernatural character in the other—and the way it is rendered duplicates similar forms found in the canonical style, even though the young lord does not appear in a calligraphic frame.[160] For these reasons, the pot, while unique, should be included in the larger Chocholá grouping.

Paleographic investigation supports this vessel's connection with the Chocholá style. As Grube (1990) pointed out, the hieroglyphic sequence is consistent with other dedicatory formulae that clearly participate in the canonical Chocholá style. The similarity occurs not only in the text's form and meaning, as Grube noted, but also in the appearance of the hieroglyphs and the way in which they are arranged. The consistency arises from the 'laws' dictating Chocholá production and the variation in the way the glyphs themselves look indicates that the congruencies were not simply the result of a single artist's preferred manner of operation.[161] The visual parallels between this text and other Chocholá sequences implies that artists working in the style did so with a strong

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[160] Compare the iconography seen here with that found on another pot (fig. 47); both include separate portraits of a young lord and a deity with a death-eye ruff.

[161] Compare the first two lines in Table 1 with the text from the vessel (fig. 47), just mentioned (see footnote 160), found further down in the same table. Several aspects indicate that a different artist created the last vessel as opposed to the first two. In the first two instances, the artist chose to use the same form of the **u** syllable—the two circles to the right of the glyph block connected by parallel, vertical lines—in writing *ujaay*. In contrast, the text from the comparative vessel (fig. 47) exhibits a different form of the **u** syllable and also uses a **lu** syllable that is less slanted in orientation. All three pieces clearly participate in the same textual style that dictated Chocholá production, while also indicating some of the variability possible in following the same set of loose textual 'laws.'

degree of intentionality. These correspondences further suggest that such vessels would have been immediately recognized and connected with other pieces in what we now call the Chocholá style.

Other aspects of the hieroglyphic inscription support such proposals. A diagnostic manner of arranging the written words appears, along with other elements that are specific to the Chocholá group (see Chapter 5). The orientation of each glyph has been reversed, as has the overarching reading order, for example, a pattern found in the Chocholá corpus (see Table 1). This particular system of writing might stem from a locus of production in or around Oxkintok, a northern site where text reversal also occurs (García Campillo 1992: 188; see Chapter 6).[162] Thus, the artist who created the pot in question seems to have intentionally made a vessel that exhibits its Chocholá-ness, given the diagnostic nature of its appearance and the fact that the variations mentioned above do not affect the characteristic qualities of the piece. In other words, variations in the basic hemispherical shape should not be used to automatically distinguish carved examples from those in the Chocholá style.

The second atypical piece mentioned above (fig. 40) participates in the canonical Chocholá style even more clearly. The only difference between it and the canonical vessels already discussed lies in its form. Not only is the hemispherical bowl type modified to emphasize the transition between the base and the rim (as in the case of the previous bowl), tripod supports have also been added. The feet, created using geometric, inverted step designs, are typical of the slateware tradition generally, however, and were only one of a number of possibilities the potter faced in choosing base type (George Bey 2007, pers. comm.). It is certainly true that Chocholá potters typically chose to avoid adding bases (see Tate 1985: 124), but such feet appear in other examples from the corpus and cannot be used as an exclusionary attribute (fig. 12). Furthermore, the scene

[162] While text strings with regular reading order and standard hieroglyphic orientation abound in the canonical group, many display a reading order that is reversed so that the text string must be read from right-to-left instead of left-to-right. Even when the reading order follows standard patterns, individual glyphic blocks can have an inverted orientation (Garcia Campillo 1992: 188).

panel provides a stereotypical example of the canonical style, including, as it does, a scroll-like cartouche partially broken by the headdress of the young lord (another typical iconographic inclusion). The vessel also contains two text strings. While the combination of a rim band and a diagonal text does not occur in other, standard examples, each individual component typifies Chocholá hieroglyphic sequences, both in the words chosen and the forms taken (as Grube [1990] indicated; see also Table 1). Thus, the two ceramics that I use to connect a sub-style to the larger Chocholá style are wholly characteristic of the canonical group while also incorporating some unusual (but allowable) variations. Furthermore, the variability found in such examples seems to indicate a high degree of intentionality: the makers of both pots consciously created immediately recognizable Chocholá pieces while at the same time incorporating differences that serve to call attention to each vessel within the larger stylistic umbrella.

### *The Chocholá Style Defined: The Calabash Category*

In defining this group and situating it within the larger Chocholá corpus, I would like to first start by describing its diagnostic features. I call this sub-group the Calabash Category because the bodies of almost all the constituent vessels display ridges commonly associated with calabashes.[163] In this way, the vessels mimic forms found in nature through their very shape; actual calabashes were also used as containers in antiquity so the visual connection is not surprising. The Calabash Category contains two sub-divisions: the Molded Calabash Sub-style (fig. 42) and the Stylized Calabash Sub-style (figs. 43, 51). In the first, the shape is created through the use of molds (or a hand molding technique) and always takes the bowl form. The body of the bowl projects out

[163] The manner of surface modification may also be extended to, or derived from, other media, i.e. wooden bowl types. A similar pattern occurred in Hawaii at least as early as the eighteenth century, for instance, during which time wooden vessels were based on calabash forms; indeed, such containers were (and are still) called 'calabashes' (see Jenkins 1989: especially 1). I would like to thank Karl Taube (2010, pers. comm.) for pointing out this parallel to me.

into space before returning, sharply, to the vessel wall and making the transition to the rim, where a rim band of hieroglyphs can always be found. In the Stylized Calabash Sub-style, the calabash-like striations are instead created by removing material from between lines arranged vertically and repetitively along the surface of the vessel. Each pair of lines meets under the rim in a soft curve with some two-dimensional angularity. The rounded quality to the line, combined with the fact that there was apparently some trouble in creating a smooth curve under the rim where the once-parallel lines meet, implies that molds were used first, during the wet phase, followed by carving during the leather hard stage.

As the foregoing discussion indicates, nothing about the manner in which these vessels were decorated indicates that they should be included within the Chocholá category. Gone is any iconographic referent and the manner of creation differs as well, so that the carving technique does not receive nearly as much emphasis as it does in canonical examples. The calabash form does participate in the larger Chocholá style, however, and the connection resides in the standardized hieroglyphic forms that occur within both calabash categories and the canonical group. In this case, both the language and writing-based versions of style are of the utmost importance. While I will leave the translation of these texts for later (see Chapter 5), even a brief perusal of the hieroglyphs found on calabash-shaped vessels demonstrates the telling similarities they share with ceramics in the canonical category. Simply consider the appearance of the bird syllable in all cases (see especially Table 1 and figs. 40, 42). While the bird as a glyphic form composes a word that refers to the vessel as a drinking cup and can be found on other Maya ceramics, the specific way in which it was carved (the flatness of the glyph block and the full-figured form, for instance; see Chapter 5) visually mimics other vessels that are clearly covered by the Chocholá stylistic umbrella. Other elements of the text are also extremely consistent and go beyond the level of uniformity associated with dedicatory sequences generally. Chocholá artists used the same words (written in the same way) over and over again, as demonstrated through a structural comparison of texts

(compare hieroglyphic sequences found on calabash vessels with canonical texts in Table 1).

An analysis of spelling conventions furthers this connection. Several forms that are typically found in Chocholá dedicatory formulae. While syllables with the same phonetic reading appear frequently in other dedicatory formulae and, indeed, in the hieroglyphic record in general, they can take a wide range of forms, even within single texts. The Chocholá sequence, however, is particularly repetitive and very little variation occurs in the way specific syllables look. The bird-shaped syllable mentioned above and used repeatedly in the Chocholá corpus frequently takes a full-figured form instead of the more normal wing type (Garcia Campillo 1992: 188). This manner of representing the syllable is diagnostic of the Chocholá style and can be seen in both of the calabash categories as well as in the canonical group (see Table 1). Other indicative visual parallels are also evident. The **lu** syllable appears here, for instance, in a vaguely anthropomorphized shape formed by a slight indentation on the left and at the bottom of the glyph, instead of the standard selection of the purely ovoid profile that typically outlines the syllable. This **lu** 'head variant' type is extremely unusual and specific to the Chocholá corpus. Not surprisingly, it occurs in both calabash types and in the canonical style.[164]

Thus, the Molded Calabash and the Stylized Calabash groups function as part of the Chocholá style. There are also a handful of ceramics (e.g. figs. 36, 52) that are either too fragmentary to indicate vessel shape or are whole vessels with smooth walls. These vessels form another sub-category (similar to the calabash types) that should also be included in the larger Chocholá grouping based on the diagnostic characteristics of the hieroglyphic inscriptions they display. All the same points that were made for the calabash-shaped vessels can be made in these cases (compare, for instance, the bird syllables found on these and other Chocholá vessels; see Table 1).

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[164] Boot (2007, pers. comm.) and David Stuart (2008, pers. comm.) concur that head variants of this hieroglyphic form are rare. In fact, Stuart knows of only one or two other, isolated examples in southern texts.

*The Chocholá Style Defined:*
*The Figural Sub-Style*

One additional sub-style can be included in the Chocholá category at this point. The vessel shapes, the inclusion of an iconographic scene set off from the vessel wall on all sides and standard imagery including young lords or old gods justify this inclusion. The group as a whole, however, behaves as a stylistic outlier because it incorporates several atypical features. First, unreadable "pseudoglyphs" typically appear and second, the imagery is heavily simplified (figs. 14, 53). Canonical versions contain a great deal of iconographic variation—almost every figure is presented with elaborate accoutrements and holds or interacts with objects in a sophisticated manner (figs. 9, 48). Even in those vessels that only display portrait heads (figs. 9, 49, 50), the figure in question often holds an object or, at the very least, sports an elaborate costume. Body proportions also tend to look more lifelike to western eyes due to the consistent ratios used in depicting head size, arm size and length and so on. In the Figural Sub-style, however, the characters are represented in an abridged manner; their costume is not quite as detailed as that found in the canonical group and they simply gesture without holding or otherwise interacting with objects. The body proportions are also a bit more compacted and less lifelike in nature. Indeed, the viewer is left with the impression that artists created the vessels in this category in the effort to emulate the Chocholá style without a full understanding of, or at least without the desire to replicate all, the rules that governed the production of the core groups.

The Figural Sub-style exhibits some key stylistic variations when compared with the canonical Chocholá category. The visual differences constitute acceptable variations within the Chocholá group, however, based on the idea that they nevertheless share a "family resemblance," a central concept in the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein. In discussing games as a metaphor for language, for example, Wittgenstein (1953: 27-28) stated, "I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than ‘family resemblances’; for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc., etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same

way." In critiquing other models of classificatory systems, Wittgenstein (1974: 75, emphasis in original) also remarked:

> This argument is based on the notion that what is needed to justify characterizing a number of processes or objects by a general concept-word is something common to them all.
>
> This notion is, in a way, *too primitive*. What a concept-word indicates is certainly a kinship between objects, but this kinship need not be the sharing of a common property or a constituent. It may connect the objects like the links of a chain, so that one is linked to another *by intermediary links*. Two neighbouring members may have common features and be *similar* to each other, while distant ones belong to the same family without any longer having anything in common. Indeed even if a feature is common to all members of the family it need not be that feature that defines the concept.

One would not then necessarily be able to literally trace the visual development of a particular trope like the seated or standing figure. Furthermore, there might well be a range of variation within the style that transformed the original object/entity in such a way that proportions were altered, as long as other Chocholá criteria were met.

In the figural sub-set, the similarities outweigh the differences, which may simply indicate distinct centers of production (secondary or tertiary centers as opposed to the primary centers at Oxkintok and other locations, an idea that will be developed in later chapters). The reticence of the potter to connect the image with either the lip or the base while making use of a geometric or calligraphic framing device acts as one of the most diagnostic traits of the Chocholá style. Potters working in the Figural Sub-style, like those creating canonical ceramics, could set the human actor in a geometric or calligraphic frame. In one example (fig. 53), the glyphic band has been cut short in such a way so as not to run into the image or interact with it in any direct way. Conversely, another piece (fig. 54) indicates that the 'rule' can be bent slightly in some rare cases. Here, for instance, the deity figure appears within an ovoid cartouche; the interior line does not touch the rim line but the outer ridge of the boundary briefly merges with the rim band. The clear use of a common Chocholá character (God L, see Chapter 4) and the striations around the scene panels that, in this case, seem to allude to the vertical striations found in conjunction with the calabash vessel forms discussed earlier, all place

it in the Chocholá Figural Sub-style. The technique of linking rim and image is highly unusual in canonical examples and other vessels that incorporate the rim band into the scene border should be conceptually linked to the larger style only once other visual traits and/or provenience has been provided to support such an inclusive approach. The reasons behind such visual distinction remain unclear at this stage. Perhaps potters outside the main nexus of Chocholá production replicated certain aspects of the style without the desire to maintain other diagnostic stylistic features. Alternately, perhaps subsidiary sites within the Chocholá sphere produced such pots in an expression of their sociopolitical affiliations and/or individuality. The selection of different vessel forms and body proportions, for instance, could also have resulted from the influence of *in situ* micro-traditions. Just how Maya nobles would have perceived this category and its relationship to or participation in the Chocholá style remains ambiguous, although future archaeological finds will hopefully provide more examples with secure locational information.

## *The Chocholá Style Defined: Differentiating Between Chocholá Ceramics and Related Carving Traditions*

Because of the internal variability of the style, it helps to be able to say not only what *is* Chocholá, but also what *is not* Chocholá: What, exactly, differentiates the Chocholá group from other carving traditions? Potters working in the Maya region certainly created many carved ceramics and, due to the nature of the technique and the medium, these vessels share commonalities with Chocholá pots. While many such ceramics are reminiscent of the Chocholá style they can just as clearly be distinguished from it. I spend the rest of this chapter providing examples that might at first seem to exhibit Chocholá traits but that, in actuality, participate in different traditions. In doing so, I hope to clarify the distinction that can be made between the Chocholá style and other closely related ceramic wares. As our awareness of the northern material record grows, we may come to find that some of these 'related' examples actually indicate a

difference in the chronological moment of production and the development of the style, as opposed to a conceptual difference in type.

I would like to begin my discussion with two pieces, one deeply carved example that Coe (1973: 126, cat. 66) associated with ancient Yucatán (fig. 55) and the Copán vase previously linked to the Chocholá style (fig. 28). In addition to its hemispherical bowl shape, the Yucatecan vessel certainly displays the depth of carving that functions as one of the most diagnostic features of the Chocholá style. In the Copán example, the artist clearly differentiated between the carved areas and the vessel walls while also incorporating another Chocholá characteristic—the diagonal hieroglyphic text opposite the image. A consideration of the way the potters arranged the figures in both cases, however, explains why Coe did not originally class the Yucatecan bowl as Chocholá and why it and the Copán example should remain separate from the group.

Chocholá ceramics reflect a very specific type of visual aesthetic. Scenes within the corpus are packed with complex imagery, yet a certain amount of room is provided for each figure or element. This spatial organization is variable and thus not strictly quantifiable, but the difference in the spacing between Chocholá examples and both the Yucatecan and Copán pots can clearly be seen. While iconographic features fill Chocholá scenes, the individual elements do not interact with one another to the same degree. Furthermore, rarely does the viewer have any sense that the figures were truncated or adjusted to fit within scene boundaries in Chocholá vessels. The fact that the figures often break their frames in the cases where the artist used a calligraphic cartouche (and that the cartouche shape to the figure's left and right can revert to a geometric frame at top and bottom in certain instances) furthers the idea that they dictate the size of the framing elements (and, indeed, the vessel itself, to a certain degree).

In the Yucatecan piece, in contrast, the figures seem to scarcely be contained by their geometric frame and the overlapping of forms obscures many parts of the entities. Additionally, there is a greater use of modeling in the Yucatec bowl and a more nuanced (though occasionally hard to understand) implication of depth given the use of overlap. The Copán vessel, while visually very different from the Yucatecan example, organizes

space in a way that is both similar to that just enumerated and different from that found in the Chocholá corpus. As with the Yucatecan piece, the viewer gets the sense that the imagery in the Copán case barely fits within its geometric scene frame, especially where the gestures of the human figure are concerned. The Copán vase also relies much more heavily on incised detail, so that very little of the carved background is visible. Indeed, the emphasis here rests on the surface of the carved areas rather than in the recesses provided by that technical approach.

Thus, from a technical point of view, the carving style connected with the Chocholá corpus provides another point of departure from other carved ceramic traditions. Artists working in the Chocholá style created two basic planes: the deeply recessed background contrasts with the figures and objects (all understood to exist in the same plane) that occur at the same level as the ceramic surface. In this way, the iconographic forms pop out from the background much more dramatically than in the Copán case. Furthermore, some slight overlap happens when the figure holds something (usually a bar or staff of some sort) in Chocholá pieces, but it never occurs to the degree that can be seen in the vessel from Yucatán.[165] Artists sometimes created a third plane or level through the application of stucco, but this layering of space occurs external to the image itself and does not affect the internal logic of the scene. As in the Yucatecan example, details are indicated through the sparing use of incised lines, but modeling is less frequent, though it does occur.[166]

Aside from the carving techniques already discussed in great detail, the blank vessel walls can also receive some distinctive modification. In the Chocholá style, surface treatment is restricted to burnishing, slipping, trickle paint and stucco additions.

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[165] Occasionally forms are superimposed on top of one another in the Chocholá corpus, but when this happens, it typically consists of a figure placed on top of an inanimate object that provides a backdrop—a cushion for example (fig. 45).

[166] Indeed, it is the heavy emphasis placed on a modeled aesthetic (as well as the color of the vessel itself and the two-tone coloration that occurs between wall and scene panel) that helps exclude yet another vessel (fig. 78) from the Chocholá grouping. This particular piece instead represents a Late Classic style associated with the Lower Motagua and Copán area (Dorie Reents-Budet 2010, pers. comm.).

Unusual visual effects typically indicate the existence of a different, though occasionally related, type. Ceramics that incorporate additional surface modification or modeling, especially when used to imply a non-ceramic material, are anomalous within the current corpus and form part of a parallel group instead, even though they bear strong similarities to the style. Appliqués, dimpling or other surface effects never occur in the Chocholá grouping. In one case (fig. 56), the scribe modified the surface to simulate a wood grain, thus creating the illusion of a non-ceramic material, while Chocholá pieces never negate the medium from which they were made so overtly (see Grube 2001: fig. 398). This example also demonstrates another way of differentiating between Chocholá and other carved traditions. The vessel contains both a geometric frame and a cartouche created using a calligraphic quality of line. The latter is set completely within the former so that the two do not touch, however. Unlike the Yucatecan example, in Chocholá pieces the two types of frames, when combined, cannot be separated from one another visually. Furthermore, in Chocholá pieces, the scribe almost always set the scene apart from the vessel wall in such a way as to make each panel clearly visible (individually) without turning the pot.

Quality of line forms yet another diagnostic feature. While incising occurs, Chocholá craftsmen used it to add detail to otherwise relatively flat images. Incised lines never create the whole shape or even the majority of any given element. The superficially carved lines evident in some pieces (e.g. fig. 57) clearly create a very different visual feel from that associated with Chocholá examples.[167] Furthermore, within the Chocholá category, heavier use of incising seems to indicate a particular vessel's

[167] The vase from Xcalumkin (fig. 57) that Grube (1990) originally classified as Chocholá falls into this pattern. Given the foregoing discussion, the contrast between the visual impact of the Xcalumkin vessel, relying completely, as it does, on incised line, and that associated with the depth of carving of the Chocholá type should be abundantly clear. The incised glyphic 'columns' that bound the image on two sides are particularly Petén-like in their suggestion of architectural forms, for instance (Dorie Reents-Budet 2010, pers. comm.), and this manner of framing iconography with text is clearly distinct from the aesthetic precepts dictating Chocholá production.

participation in one of the sub-styles named above, which, in turn, seems to point to multiple centers of production (see Chapters 4-6).

Finally, the way in which hieroglyphic forms are presented and the manner in which they do and do not interact with the scene (when imagery is present) creates another distinctive feature specific to the Chocholá category. Glyphic strings, whether diagonal, vertical or rim band sequences, do not interact with, or even touch, the boundary created for the imagery. They often appear on opposite sides of the vessel, for example, or in a rim text that hovers, unconnected, above the scene panel. Artists occasionally inserted brief glyphic captions within the scenes themselves, but these inclusions are always discrete from the longer texts just mentioned. The appearance of hieroglyphs in conjunction with imagery can also be codified; glyphic blocks can either be raised on a rectangular ground with each glyph incised into this geometric base or the glyphic forms can be raised individually from the background—in the case of the latter, the glyph is slightly more deeply carved in low relief. This pattern of text usage contrasts with other carved ceramics where pseudoglyphs enter the image, are not differentiated from the pictorial motifs based on level of carving, and/or act as partial frames (as in fig. 58). What is more, in the case where vertical and diagonal texts are included, Chocholá vessels most frequently display only a single column of text although two columns do occur more rarely. Three or more columns of hieroglyphics never appear and multiple columns of text distributed between scene panels occur with even less frequency than the two-column strings.

## *Conclusion*

The goals of this chapter have been twofold: to identify the methodological framework within which the Chocholá style may be defined while also indicating the characteristic ways in which it may be differentiated from other carving traditions. In developing my methodological approach, I have combined art historical, anthropological and archaeological approaches and have made the concerted effort to emphasize the

aspects (like technical and iconographic styles) that are particularly cogent in discussing the Chocholá group. I have also added an overtly text-based aspect to the stylistic methodology that allowed me to explicitly include the calabash-shaped categories. Such a transparent approach has resulted in a more detailed definition for the style than that found in the published literature to date and my consideration of formal properties has also allowed me to distinguish between the Chocholá style and the other carved ceramic types with which it is often connected.

The stylistic methodology and the definition provided here continue to influence and frame the rest of my analysis. I use aspects of style to identify artistic hands, for example. A more nuanced consideration of the sub-groups I have just defined also encourages discussions regarding the actual production of these ceramics and for that reason I would like to spend a few moments now considering how theoretical models regarding stylistic expression can impact our understanding of the mechanisms responsible for Chocholá production and distribution. In this way, I approach an understanding of Chocholá stylistic expression as communicative.

As my effort to define a Chocholá grouping—composed of related yet distinct sets—indicates, it is clearly recognizable and just as clearly differentiable from other luxury wares. Within this broad base, the canonical and calabash categories of vessels provide the most cohesive stylistic sets. Does such visual distinction, when combined with the restricted patterns of production and dissemination I explore in subsequent chapters, merely result from potters (and their patrons) working in concert? Or does it support the idea that the Maya responsible for creating and distributing such vessels did so because they also served a very real, albeit ideological, function in hierarchically organized relationships of exchange?

As the stylistic principle dictates, we must understand Chocholá vessels as works that both construct and are constructed by their specific social context.[168] Particular social atmospheres gave rise to, and thus governed, Maya ceramic production. Clay

[168] Please see my earlier discussion of Shanks (1999: 19) and Shanks and Tilley's (1992: 142, 152) work, wherein the authors discuss the dialectical relationship between style and culture.

objects were manufactured within a system of patronage that speaks to a particular set of elite concerns. At least one major site began producing Chocholá vessels during a time of political change (and possible consolidation) and expansion. At this temporal moment, important individuals evidently began demanding a particular kind of high status pottery, presumably because they needed such material goods in the ongoing negotiations of power that took place during feasting and other ritual events. In this sense, context, like the actual artist, constructs.

While all stylistic expression may serve a communicative role, this is especially true when the vessels in question are luxury wares. Not only are they made according to their own social reality, they, in turn, construct that social panorama. I suggest, for instance, that Chocholá pots functioned as one way of supporting the positions enjoyed by the lords who commissioned them. Indeed, iconographically and epigraphically, the style reifies elite power.

Artists created a Chocholá vision in a consistent, repeated manner. Can the style then be said to constitute a group that, when distributed throughout the political geography, created an invisible web of interconnections? Can these pots be seen as functioning in a way similar to Lemmonier's pig traps, in that they sent messages of group affiliation and identity? Because they form an easily identifiable group of objects and because the Maya would certainly have recognized such visual correspondence, I use the rest of my work on the style to investigate just such issues. I see the owners of Chocholá vessels as projecting a certain place in the world, for instance. Certainly this position relates to iconographic and textual statements emphasizing legitimacy and status, but these specific messages only appear when the viewer can closely examine individual pieces. The immediacy of style (and its identification) means that it functions at a much more basic level, however. The viewer would not need to carefully peruse a particular pot in order to recognize it as Chocholá. That association is actively displayed through the basics of appearance, formatting, etc. Furthermore, given the fact that the young lord as an iconographic trope also behaves stylistically, the Maya viewer may have automatically associated the Chocholá look not only with specific locales and political

entities but also with more iconographically based messages regarding the divine institution of rulership.

Variation within the style also implies multiple workshops (see Chapters 4-6). Just why did such disparate artistic groups create vessels in the style? The dramatic differences that can be seen within the overarching Chocholá category, especially between the canonical group and the Figural category, seems to indicate not only the existence of multiple groups of artisans but also various, hierarchically organized centers of production. In this context, my stylistic perspective suggests that the appearance of variants—be they emulative or, more likely, appropriative in nature—at centers located some distance from apparent core production loci indicates yet another level of identity construction.

My comments here have merely skimmed the surface of analytic possibility offered by the stylistic hypothesis. Even so, they warrant further investigation because they indicate significant ways in which the Chocholá group may have functioned at an ideological level. In what follows, I interpret the iconographic (Chapter 4) and hieroglyphic forms (Chapter 5) found on Chocholá pots in order to identify common tropes and themes. I also consider the geographical extent of Chocholá distribution, scanty though it may be, and use stylistic analysis to suggest further geographical connections (Chapter 6). In my concluding chapter (Chapter 7), I investigate stylistic expression from a temporal perspective in order to contextualize Chocholá pieces not only within space but also within time. The idea that style is inherently communicative and possibly ideological as well as being, in some ways, more immediate than other methods of exchanging ideas underlies my entire investigation into the Chocholá style and informs sections of each of the chapters that follow.

## Chapter 4
## Chocholá Iconography

### *Introduction*

Chocholá ceramics are frequently pictured in exhibition catalogues and general treatises on the Maya (see Grube 2001; Miller 1999) due to their intricately carved imagery. Such publications include brief analyses of individual pots and their iconographic components. As I have noted previously, however, after Michael Coe's (1973) seminal definition of the style, only two scholars, Carolyn Tate (1985) and Traci Ardren (1996), have attempted to explain typical Chocholá iconography. In varying degrees, both Tate and Ardren adopted Coe's original perspective, wherein the funerary context of such vessels resulted in representations of the underworld and narratives connected with the *Popol Vuh*.[169] Robicsek and Hales' (1981) idea that pictorial pottery could be interpreted as pages in a now lost mythic narrative also underlies some of Tate's and Ardren's observations (see Chapter 1). Because they are the only two scholars to try to catalogue and classify Chocholá iconography as a whole, I will now spend a few moments briefly reviewing Tate's and Ardren's contributions before expanding on their findings in later sections.

Tate (1985: 125-130) identified five iconographic themes: "The Water Lily Complex," "The Slayed Fish Monster Myth," "Underworld Resurrection and the Vision Serpent," "God L with God K on His Back," and "Ballplayers." In doing so, she also proposed that certain types of scenes correspond to specific vessel forms (Tate 1985: 132). Representations of the "Slayed Fish Monster" can only be found on "restricted orifice vessels," for example, which are also connected with representations of God L, while "beakers" are more likely to contain waterlily imagery or a single supernatural. Tate then stated that "this suggests a specific ritual function for each vessel," although exactly what such a ritual function might be remained unclear.

Throughout her discussion of the first three themes, Tate relied on then current

[169] Please see Christenson (2003) for an English translation of the *Popol Vuh*.

examinations of ancient Maya mythology and, like Robicsek and Hales (1981), explicitly connected Chocholá imagery to a larger mythic narrative (Chapter 1). Thus, the serpentine heads associated with waterlily imagery (fig. 59) represented "supernatural characters of underworld lore" according to Tate (1985: 125-126, figs. 2, 3), although she did not introduce specific narrative possibilities. Additionally, she (following Schele 1979) linked the waterlily complex (see fig. 60) with agricultural practices not found in Yucatán, although iconographic references to the waterlily trope now appear at sites like Uxmal. In my expanded corpus of Chocholá ceramics, waterlily imagery is most typically connected with the portraits of young lords, although water birds can be seen as well. While a direct connection between agricultural practices and the waterlily complex can no longer be supported, waterlily references do mark supernatural contexts and appear with extreme frequency.

Tate (1985: 126-127, figs. 4-6) linked her second scene type, centered on the "Slayed Fish Monster Myth," with a serpentine figure popular in Chocholá iconography. She suggested that artists often combined this entity with other representations of a bound god, GI (or the "Aged Stingray God;" figs. 24, 61, 62). Tate noted that the snake appeared in conjunction with (and on the opposite side of the vessel from) typical versions of what she called the "water lily monster," but she did not discuss the difference in iconographic tags indicating the separate nature of these two entities. In fact, there is probably a great deal of overlap between the two. Tate also, in her attempt to reconstruct mythic narratives, connected this second supernatural figure with GI as a paddler god and with the fish story found on the Tikal canoe scene bones.

In Tate's (1985: 127, figs. 7-9) third scene category, "Underworld Resurrection and the Vision Serpent," she considered yet another type of serpentine being whose mouth functions as a portal (fig. 19). Related imagery incorporates the busts of young lords placed within what she identified as boney cartouches (figs. 63, 64) in connection with the *Popol Vuh* story involving the death of the Hero Twins and the scattering of their ashes in a river (Tate 1985: 127). In the illustrations Tate (1985: figs. 8, 9) provided (figs. 63, 64), however, the cartouches are flowery rather than boney. Recent advances in

Maya epigraphy also indicate that the figures seem to be living, historical individuals named in the accompanying texts (see Chapters 2, 5; Grube 1990), although Tate was correct in indicating that deities like God K and an old god also occasionally emerge from the bearded, snake-like creature.

In her penultimate scene category, Tate (1985: 129-130, figs. 10, 11, 16) discussed God L and noted that he is portrayed with remarkable consistency (fig. 65). The head of God K also occurs frequently, attached to the back of God L (figs. 66, 67). Unlike her discussion of the first three scenes, Tate did not allude to mythic stories despite the fact that she saw one pot as providing two sequential scenes of action involving God L. Time and length constraints prevented Tate from discussing pictorial diversity (and associated symbolic variation). God L is always easily identifiable, as Tate noted, but he spills "a black, pellet-like substance" from a jar in one case, for example (fig. 65), while sitting quietly with a rope tied around his neck and God K attached to his back in others (e.g. fig. 67). Such variety also points to another problem with Tate's God L/God K scene category: in the example that shows God L with the jug, God K seems to be absent.

Tate (1985: 130, figs. 12-14) ended her discussion of scene types by indicating that the ballplayer scenes common to the Chocholá style (figs. 17, 25, 26) consisted of a typical figural pose and the appearance of two different types of headgear—a hat similar to God L's and a bird headdress type. As in her discussion of God L, Tate described the stereotypical representation of the ballplayer and his setting without mentioning the *Popol Vuh*, despite the fact that it includes a mythic ballgame set in the underworld. Tate was exactly right not to connect the ballplayers with mythic entities. Epigraphic advances in the years following her investigation indicate that the scene captions often identify the iconographic forms as images of historical individuals. Tate concluded by positing a connection between Chocholá ceramics and central Petén artistic styles based on what she saw as dramatic visual similarities between the two in the face of oppositional northern trends (Tate 1985: 132).

Other vessels that display similar carving techniques and iconography were also

considered (Tate 1985: 130-132). Tate suggested that some of the pots first identified by Coe (1973) as Chocholá were not actually created in the style although they were 'closely related' to it. Such ceramics include supernatural animals (monkey scribes and deer) and young lords (occasionally in a plano-relief style). According to Tate, these vessels probably constitute a particular manifestation of Puuc slateware influenced by the Chocholá style. As I have shown (see Chapter 3), a more precise definition of the Chocholá style and a larger working corpus now allows for the inclusion of many vessels originally excluded by Tate, although clear examples of the Provincia Plano-Relief type are still distinct from the Chocholá style (see Chapter 7). Furthermore, with advances in the study of Maya iconography, many of Tate's original suppositions and interpretations can be further augmented and corrected.

Only one other scholar has dealt with Chocholá iconography as a whole. As noted above, Traci Ardren reacted directly to Tate's interpretation of Chocholá imagery. Not only did she refute Tate's (1985: 123, 132) suggestion regarding seemingly Petén-based influence due to stylistic similarities (see Chapters 2, 6), Ardren (1996: 241) also identified scenes differently based on an expanded corpus. Ardren (1996: 241), for example, included, in order of frequency, "God L, male figures, rulers, single glyphs, God L with God K, vision serpents, palace scenes and ballplayers," although she also called attention to many instances where the imagery does not fall into such set categories. Like Tate, however, Ardren seems to draw from the perspectives popularized by Coe in the 1970s and Robicsek and Hales in the '80s. Although Ardren tended to constrain her analysis to the vessels at hand, she too relied on the connection with the underworld and a narrative context both sets of authors championed (Chapter 1).

According to Ardren (1996: 240), Chocholá representations of God L typically include the ubiquitous bird associated with the deity, in addition to a merchant bundle, or a pot with water spilling out if it (fig. 65). Less frequently, God L carries a God K head on his back or holds it in his hands (fig. 20, 66, 67). The full-figure form of God K is almost never shown in Chocholá examples and never in connection with other entities. Like Tate, Ardren (1996: 241) linked certain scenes to larger narrative sequences. She

suggested, for instance, that the God L/God K association represents some later point in the story connected with (following Taube 1992: 79) God L's spearing of God K. In contrast to the approaches mentioned above, however, Ardren chose to focus on the specific mythic storyline that links God L and God K in the Dresden Codex and did not allude to an overarching meta-narrative or the *Popol Vuh*.

Ardren (1996: 241-242) also distinguished between such deity representations and depictions of youthful male figures limited to representations of busts (fig. 39). In these scenes, she noted that jaguar headdresses occur repeatedly, as does a "long, paddle like object" held in front of the torso (fig. 34; Ardren 1996: 241). Ardren analyzed the "paddles" and suggested that they feature a hieroglyphic tag indicating that the object was made out of wood, which she thought might link them with the paddlers and the Underworld. In several cases, however, personal names and titles appear in the associated dedicatory formula and can be interpreted as naming the individuals pictured (see Boot 1997a; Grube and Gaida 2006). In a related scene type, a single ruler sits on a throne; conceptually, these two scenes are clearly linked and, according to Ardren (1996: 241), when combined, they outnumber God L representations. Nominal information rarely appears and many of these entities could not yet be connected with specific, historical individuals.[170] Due to this lack of specificity, Ardren (1996: 242) proposed that such depictions might represent generalized hero types or characters from mythology. The historical connection made in the related bust type (where the person referred to in the text seems to be the same individual pictured), however, implies that the seated ruler convention was also used to represent actual individuals.

The last three scenes identified by Ardren (1996: 242) are less common (only 5 per scene in Ardren's corpus) and more iconographically repetitive in nature than Ardren's other image categories. The serpent as portal indicates movement between the

[170] Ardren (1996: 242) suggested that such details may have been added in now eroded layers of stucco and she observed small traces of stucco in some cartouches. The widespread use of dedicatory texts and scene 'captions' in the corpus seems to make textual inclusions in a stucco layer unlikely, however. Furthermore, pieces that retain significant amounts of stucco do so on their uncarved surfaces (fig. 4).

realms and a human head frequently emerges from its mouth. In contrast, ballplayers are securely linked with the historical record through glyphic tags incorporated into the scenes themselves. In fact, it is on one of these vessels (fig. 17) that the reference to **OHL-si-?-TOK'**, the Oxkintok lord, was first recognized (García Campillo 1992). As Tate implied, they exhibit the greatest uniformity in representation and both scholars emphasized the headdress types worn by the players while also briefly mentioning the glyphic captions incorporated into the scene (Ardren 1996: 242; Tate 1985: 130).

Palace scenes, in contrast, show a great deal of variability, according to Ardren (1996: 242-243). Two elites sit facing one another with occasional captions placed between the two figures (fig. 48). Other palace scenes alter this general presentation by twisting the body of the ruler to receive an object offered from behind, in one case, or by introducing additional figures, including, for example, a dwarf and a "foreigner" (connected, according to Ardren [1996: 243], with the Putun or Gulf Coast Maya) (figs. 15, 21, 45). Other iconographic tropes also repeat but in such small quantities that Ardren did not attempt to identify full scene groups. She simply listed several motifs, while also discussing unique imagery found in her corpus. Ultimately, Ardren suggested that more meaningful images were presumably repeated more frequently in the corpus. As is always the case with such ancient cultural residue, however, sampling issues may cause an undue emphasis on one particular set of scenes over others (as Ardren acknowledged).

Both Tate's and Ardren's work mark a significant advance in the analysis of the Chocholá style. In general, both publications grew out of talks given at Palenque Round Tables and thus each scholar intended to provide an overview of diagnostic Chocholá traits instead of conducting a nuanced look at the iconographic elements within each scene category. Furthermore, ongoing work regarding the identification of Maya iconographic forms and their meanings allows for a more nuanced (though by no means 'complete') 'reading' of these scenes, both individually and as part of a larger whole. New Chocholá examples also increase such precision and encourage a more refined set of typologies that combine both image style and image type. With that said, however, both

Tate and Ardren were able to identify the most repetitive (and thus, as Ardren pointed out, probably the most culturally significant, assuming a representative sampling) scene types even though neither of them had time to investigate the reasons behind such skewed percentages. In what follows, I expand on the basic snapshot provided by Tate and Ardren. In doing so, I coordinate iconographic analysis with stylistic investigations, develop a statistical understanding of scene distributions and suggest more detailed interpretations for standard scene categories, in addition to considering atypical examples.

Ultimately, such a holistic perspective indicates that while Coe's and Robicsek and Hales' original approaches can no longer be successfully used to directly decode iconographic programs, certain aspects of their methodologies certainly still pertain. I argue, for example, that Chocholá artists overwhelmingly chose to include watery iconography in connection with historical individuals, thus placing them in underworldly settings. I see this as part of a larger, legitimizing image program that includes lords in historical settings as well as representing their capacity to transcend spatial boundaries. Supernatural imagery also abounds, often alluding to individual mythic narratives distinct from the representations of young lords. When seen as parts of a larger iconographic program, such pieces complement the watery and underworldly allusions seen in connection with the historical characters. Because these vessels were actually used in sociopolitical settings, Chocholá pictorial tropes functioned to legitimize and solidify (and/or reify) the owner's position of power.

## *The Scenes*

Many of the scenes I define overlap with those already identified by both Tate and Ardren. I have chosen to take a slightly different approach, however. I first introduce broad scene categories as a way of identifying major iconographic trends. I develop these groups based on an examination of the iconographic components that receive central focus. I then establish sub-scenes in order to demonstrate and discuss standard

variations within these larger groups. Before beginning this discussion, however, I would like to note an overarching structural principle: the number of human figures outweighs the number of deities or supernatural entities found in the current corpus. Thus, in developing my categories and sub-categories, I focus on representations of humans and the permutations such iconography can take before moving on to consider otherworldly imagery.

## *Scene 1: The Young Lord*

The young lord is the most frequently represented trope in the current corpus; ceramics containing representations of youthful humans account for approximately 53% of all vessels displaying iconography.[171] These men typically appear alone and are clothed in a simple manner. Each image probably represents the portrait of a particular young lord and the corpus as a whole thus likely presents a large group of youthful elites all depicted in similar circumstances. While each portrayal should be distinguished from all others based on the idea that a different individual is pictured in each case, commonalities crosscut such specificity. The elite figure often appears wearing only a loincloth with little or no embellishment, for example, although he occasionally has on a netted shirt and bracelets as well. Chocholá artists chose to include little additional ornamentation, with a few notable exceptions. The youthful figure wears a basic necklace type and earspools, the exact forms of which vary within consistent patterns, as will be discussed shortly. He also wears a headdress that supplies the most elaborate part of his costume. Occasionally these characters carry or hold things in their hands and they are frequently framed by a cartouche of volutes.

[171] All of the statistical data I provide in this chapter is restricted to vessels that incorporate imagery. Those pieces that are either blank or calabash-shaped are not included in these numbers.

The young lord category contains several scene types. To avoid needless complication, I identify four basic subdivisions:

a. Isolated Busts
b. Lone Lords
c. Conference and Multiple Figure Scenes
d. Ballplayers

Within the first three sub-scenes, variation occurs along standardized lines. Chocholá ceramicists were so consistent in the rendition of particular headdress types that the major variations in this motif would at first almost seem to support the development of further sub-groups. Perusing the young lord iconographic complex as a whole, however, indicates that such variability cannot be consistently associated with just one element. Headdress forms might be standardized within one set of vessels, for example, while other elements, like framing cartouches, repeat across sets. Some iconographic details would encourage one grouping while others would negate that categorization and suggest another. For this reason, I suggest conceptual groupings and make no attempt to break down the scene types further.

## *Scene 1a: Isolated Busts*

Chocholá artists particularly favored compositions in which only the torso of a young lord appears.[172] With the exception of the Ballplayer Scene, this group is by far the most homogenous of those that picture humans. In almost all ceramics displaying human busts, the elite figure is set within a cartouche displaying watery and/or flowery

[172] These pots, as a group, account for almost 51% of all vessels within the Young Lord category. Indeed, this is the largest grouping in the entire corpus and amounts to approximately 27% of all Chocholá ceramics containing imagery. In other words, when Chocholá artists selected imagery, they gravitated towards bust portraits over a quarter of the time!

imagery.[173] Aquatic signs, formed by closely arranged circles or ovals of descending and ascending size, typically dot the volutes that create the scenic borders and place the figures in a watery world, at least at the moment of depiction (fig. 68; see Taube 2003: 427 and Schele 1988: 301-302 for the identification of water scrolls). The Maya often used scene borders as a way of defining a space that differs from that of the viewer (see Fields and Reents-Budet 2005: cat. 61). The appearance of the cartouche form functions in the same way: it hides parts of the figure from sight, implying a recession in space as if the viewer peers into the image through a 'window' or portal (figs. 50, 64). Furthermore, some of the figures seem to lean out over their frames, while the cartouche conceals the lower part of their body. The person holding the pot clearly sees not only the represented individual's face but also his arm(s) and headdress superimposed over sections of the enclosing framework (fig. 9).

Such imagery is not uncommon and can be found in other standard Maya representations of otherworldly spaces. In Burial 116 (c. 733 CE) at Tikal, for instance, excavators found several carved bone implements that display the bust of a human figure set within a calligraphic cartouche frame (see Coggins 1975: figs. 111a, b). Like the Chocholá examples, each youthful individual interacts with the border by grasping it in one hand. In the Tikal bones, however, the frame overlaps with the hand instead of the converse, as in the Chocholá rendition of this pictorial motif. The artists responsible for the objects found in Burial 116 mounted the circular cartouches on top of anthropomorphic heads that Coggins (1975: 467) connected with the underworld. The

[173] It is possible that several of the figures actually represent young elite women (as in fig. 39) and it may be that the netted shirt is meant to signify their femininity. In most cases, however, aspects that indicate gender (like the use of an ipil and the female head in nominal phrases) are either not included or cannot be identified, due, in part, to the fact that we only see the figure's head and not his or her full body. Many of the humans in this category certainly represent young males, though, so while I would like to acknowledge the possibility that a small number of female portraits exist, I will use the masculine pronoun when referring to the figures in this group. There are a small number of such portraits whose associated texts include the glyphic modifier indicating a female identity. In these rare cases, I will indicate the change in gender through the use of the 'she' pronoun.

cartouches themselves are specifically vegetal in nature and terminate in waterlily blossoms above the youthful portraits (Coggins 1975: 467). Chocholá artists alluded to the watery, vegetative underworld in much the same way and employed a number of visually related tropes in rendering the busts of young lords.[174]

In the Chocholá case, the highly standardized nature of this compositional arrangement made it one of the few cases in which iconography functioned as a diagnostic stylistic attribute (Chapter 3). Such pictorial devices are far from the solid, immobile portals that take a quatrefoil form. They instead swirl around the figure and the space that they encase in a fluid manner that complements their watery markings. As I have already noted above, the young lords interact with their moving boundaries and, in an odd permutation of this cartouche form, the swirling volutes seem to emerge out of the area behind where the headdress fastens onto the human's head. The artist makes the way the one overlaps with the other clear through the slight suggestion of depth, however. In almost all cases, the cartouche functions as a permeable, constantly shifting framing device, through which the viewer sees the young lord as he appears in another realm. Occasionally, the frame is connected even more directly with the individual pictured; two examples explicitly show the cartouche materializing from a flowering element on the forehead of the figure in question (figs. 69, 70).[175] The connection with an alternate reality remains consistent, but here the space originates in, and revolves around the figure

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[174] In a related iconographic system, artists at Piedras Negras carved ruler portraits into the eyes of a mountain monster head also connected with vegetation (see Martin and Grube 2000: 152). This throne-back creates a similar pattern of interaction between the people depicted and the frames that surround them. As the two portrait heads look towards each other over the nose bridge of the anthropomorphized mountain, their hands overlap with, and rest against their respective eye socket frames.

[175] The same group of scribes probably made both of these examples. A single volute emerges from a particular type of flower attached to the lord's headband. Both scrolls are watery and/or vegetal and they sweep down in front of the person's face and around in front of his torso. The framing element incorporates small iconographic details that repeat almost exactly in both instances. One demonstrates a more complicated, nuanced approach to the imagery (fig. 69), however, while the other (fig. 70) simplifies the constituent forms. When grouped together, these pieces imply the work of a master artist and his protégé.

himself. A similar connection between frame and lord occurs in polychrome examples as well, as can be seen in a vase recently acquired by the M.H. de Young Museum and the Legion of Honor in San Francisco.

As the two examples just mentioned indicate, flowers frequently complement the watery theme. In fact, some pieces focus entirely on floral as opposed to aquatic imagery. Often found in Maya iconography (especially in earspool forms; see Taube 2004a), generalized flower types were particularly popular amongst Chocholá artists (fig. 64). When this flower is used, the ceramicist typically included only vague water allusions or omitted them entirely, although the fringe chosen for some examples implies an aquatic species of plant. The portrait of the young lord actually acts as the 'face' of the flower in these pieces. It emerges from and is framed by directionally oriented blossoms.[176] Little *ajaw* faces adorn the tips of the petals while the elite figure also wears earspools that mimic the flowery shape. Given such framing devices, it is interesting to note that the ancient Maya conceived of the place where the ancestors live as flowery and connected the soul with aromatic flowers and death with white flowery breath (Taube 2004a).

One other type of vegetal image emphatically connects the cartouche with water. Similar to the imagery found on the bones in the Tikal burial, many Chocholá examples incorporate waterlily blossoms that surround the young lord, either forming part of his headdress or emerging from the end of the object he holds. They then overlap with, and form part of, the corner of the aforementioned cartouches marked by aquatic signs. The

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[176] The Maya used the visual logic of the cut-away perspective frequently. Stuart (2005a: 167-168), for example, mentioned such viewing parameters when he discussed the Sun God as appearing within the "womb or stomach" of the Starry Deer Crocodile: "Representations of the solar cartouche [and deity head] within the crocodile's body suggest that the sun was 'consumed' by the crocodile during its nightly course beneath the earth…."
In other pieces, the young lord emerges from a flower that appears at the bottom of the scene. Such imagery plays up flower-water connections by emphasizing a visual link between misty breath scrolls and flower blossoms. The flowery form (and its function) also recalls representations of tortoise shells as places of emergence (e.g. the crosshatching and inset circles evident in the depiction of the turtle shell on a famous plate depicting the birth of the Maize God [Robicsek and Hales 1981: 91, fig. 117]).

connection between this watery space and that framed by the other, standardized flower type is made particularly evident not only through the repeated form and arrangement shared by these two variations but also through the clear combination of an aqueous border and the standardized flower form in one instance (fig. 50).

The accoutrements of the young lord become increasingly symbolic in connection with such imagery. In some cases, he wears a simple tied headdress and his hair is knotted so that it falls in front of his face (fig. 50), reminiscent of the Maize God's top knot (Taube 1992: 41). Another headdress type includes waterlily blossoms, as already mentioned, while the third and final form consists of waterlily flowers sprouting from a jaguar head (often animated with breath scrolls; fig. 34).[177] While the youthful individuals pictured in each case represent identifiable historical figures, they bear god-like attributes, probably due to their otherworldly setting. The use of a bound or conical headdress terminating in a flower at the forehead (see figs. 7, 71), for example, is characteristic of Classic versions of the Wind God (Taube 1992: 57-59, 2004).[178]

While the lords themselves wear very little else, as already noted, their regalia frequently connects them with actions associated with bloodletting. Though simple circular and slightly more complex flower earspools abound, a significant number of figures wear paper strips through their ears instead (fig. 50). The substitution of paper for earplugs refers to the widespread practice of piercing the ear in order to obtain blood for deity veneration that continued up to and after the time of the conquest (see McAnany 1995: 44-45; Stuart 1988; Weeks and Hill 2006: 359). Many Classic Maya examples connect bloodletting specifically with the ear (see Kerr Database: K638 and K1206 and Stuart 1988: fig. 5.1a, d). In addition to the paper strips, one lord sports blood scrolls on

[177] In one case (fig. 9), what seems to be the 'smoking *ajaw'* sign is attached to the back of the jaguar head. This element, combined with the fact that the jaguar appears to be in mid-roar (possibly with volutes of smoke coming out of the mouth) identifies the creature as the Waterlily Jaguar. Taube (1992: 54) suggested that this entity is linked with "lineage through the male line," and its use here probably serves to mark the legitimate position of the young lord depicted.

[178] Significantly, the Wind God sometimes appears in watery settings while in the Early Classic period, lords could be "portrayed as fishermen who conjure gods and ancestral souls as their symbolic catch" (Taube 2004a: 77).

his cheeks (fig. 40), indicating yet another form of letting blood, in this case likely through the pricking of the tongue, a practice explicitly represented in Yaxchilan lintel 24, for instance (see Freidel, Schele and Parker 1993: 204-205; McAnany 1995:44-45; Stuart 1988).[179]

While simple beaded necklaces and pectorals are common in this category, a rope tied around the neck replaces these aspects of elite costume in a few examples (figs. 9 12).[180] While such imagery recalls the treatment of prisoners, in this case it seems to refer instead to the end result held in common—the collection of blood. The appearance of a rope necklace and even the occasional rendition of the way it is knotted in some Chocholá examples may refer to the larger concept of 'binding.' If so, then the lord can further be directly connected with the institution of divine kingship. In addition to being linked with kingly accession, the Maya also often connected binding with lineage and ancestry as well as important temporal changes, ritual celebrations and dedications (Benson 1978; Bricker 1986; Guernsey and Reilly 2006; Houston, Stuart and Taube 2006: 81-87; Stross 1988; Stuart 1996). When rope knots are displayed, they may also complement other typical Chocholá imagery.[181] Some Chocholá representations of God L emphasize a knotted rope necklace as well. In one example (fig. 65), God L appears in one scene with a rope tied around his neck, while he is in the act of pouring water out of a large jug in the other. As I have pointed out, the young lords under consideration here are also often surrounded by watery imagery. Similar representations of non-captive

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[179] There is the slight possibility that the cheek scrolls should be identified as evidence of ritual scarification instead of indexes of bloodletting, but the other blood-related iconography that occurs in the Chocholá corpus suggests otherwise.

[180] While the neck ornament is hard to see in Spinden's (1913: fig. 186) drawing and looks bead-like in Vaillant's (1927: fig. 291) version (fig. 9c). The actual pot seems to be the one now on display at Dumbarton Oaks (yet it is a different vessel from that pictured in fig. 34, unless the modern artists consistently miss-sketched the last glyph in fig. 9 and inserted a different typical Chocholá title). It clearly shows light, repeated parallel striations—the Maya way of representing corded material—on the necklace. What may be paper strips also appear in the lord's ears.

[181] Many cultures connect knots with water imagery: "In works of art or as an ornamental motif knotwork is an aquatic symbol, embodying the shimmer and surge of the waves" (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1994: 578).

elites wearing rope necklaces occur across the Maya region at sites like Palenque (e.g. Temple XIX and XX) and Yaxchilan. In fact, at Yaxchilan, the rope clearly appears around the neck of the young king (who also, interestingly, sports a complexly woven or netted shirt) as he receives the jaguar headdress on Lintel 26. The rope necklace may also have been worn during the bloodletting ceremony depicted on Lintel 24.[182]

Further evidence indicates that none of the lords can be classed as captives. While the lack of elaborate finery often reflects prisoner status in Maya iconography, in these cases it instead seems to function as an extension of the sacrifice/captive complex and associated royal autosacrifice. Indeed, the Chocholá lords retain earspools and headdresses exhibiting varying degrees of complexity, as well as necklaces, bracelets and pectorals in most instances. Furthermore, while these individuals are specifically connected with elements (like ropes) typically thought to indicate the demoralization of prisoners (see Baudez and Mathews 1978), they are not otherwise bound and retain enough of their elite regalia to negate such a status. The figure with blood scrolls on his cheeks, for instance, holds a mirror in front of his face, an action not associated with captives in known Maya iconography (fig. 40). Those with papers through their ears and ropes around their necks also display nose attachments used by other elites in standard imagery (like the kings of Palenque).

Many of the young lords hold objects that end in waterlily blossoms (figs. 9, 34). These vegetal implements are anthropomorphized and, instead of being paddles, as Tate (1985) and Ardren (1996) suggested, could represent an agricultural tool. In fact, Taube (1985: 175), in considering the journey of the Maize God, noted the pointed end of the 'paddles,' and suggested that they related to the cycle of corn, probably functioning as digging sticks. Quenon and Le Fort (1997: 894, fig. 26), in revisiting Maize God iconography, supported Taube's interpretation and again called attention to the strangely shaped 'paddle.' In the illustration they provide, this object seems to have a somewhat pliable nature given the curvature with which the painter illustrated the meeting of the

[182] The profile view makes this identification highly uncertain but the necklace assemblage seems to include a rope knot.

haft and base. Indeed, such an identification might account for the greater pliability evidenced by these objects, which, in other scenes, have been connected with creation events (see Kerr Database: K1247; David Stuart 2007, pers. comm.). While the diagnostic point at the tip is missing, the general shape is also reminiscent of so-called scepters; not only do they retain the same basic L form, actual 'scepters' were frequently carved with human figures and were clearly another aspect of elite regalia (see Grube and Martin 2001: fig. 230). An odd conflation of the two object types might explain why the stick/scepter is held with the large, paddle-like end up, by the lord's face, instead of down, in a typical digging position. The fact that some of them sprout waterlily blossoms from the shaft further suggests the connection between such elite paraphernalia and actual tools used during the agricultural cycle. Other young lords in this scene grouping seem to hold plant sprouts in the place of the digging sticks, which complements an agricultural (as opposed to a paddle) assocation (figs. 63, 68).

While scenes depicting the busts of young lords are widely variable, they all seem to revolve around a specific set of associations linking the leader with self-sacrifice, penitence and proper duty paid to the gods. In the schema presented here, such actions result in his ability to enter a watery (and/or flowery) world and thus access another realm, specifically that of the ancestors. Taube (2004a) analyzed representations of Flower Mountain and connected it with the ancestors. While mountains are not specifically indicated in representations of the Chocholá lords, the concept of a flowery ancestral paradise was widespread and constantly alluded to in late northern façade programs (Taube 2004a: 83).

Schele (1988: 301-302) also noted the liminal quality of such a space when discussing the tablet from Temple XIV at Palenque:

> The middle area of the ground register includes a line of small and large dots. This motif occurs as a sign for water…. The lower third of the ground register includes 'water' stacks and a series of glyphs that read phonetically as *ba-na-ba-na-ba*. I suggest that in all the western Maya languages these phonetic signs were meant to read as *naab*, the term for waterlily and for bodies of still water such as lakes and canals. The identification of the lower register of the panel as water is reinforced by the decoration of the outer wall of the sanctuary…. Below these figures,

> the basal register across the entire front of the temple is marked with waterlilies in personified form (Acosta 1977: fig. 13). The basal registers of both the sanctuary and the sanctuary tablet are, therefore, marked with the signs—shell scrolls, 'water' stacks, 'water' lines, and waterlilies—that mark water environments in Maya art. The figures on the tablet literally dance on water. Since water was often used as the transitional element between the Middleworld and the Underworld (see the Tikal canoe scenes and the other Early Classic burial iconography at Tikal), the event shown is placed either at this transitional point or in the underworld. The pictured activities do not take place in historical space.

In a footnote, Schele (1988: 302) further added, "It now seems evident that, in at least some afterlife mythology, the Underworld was conceived as being underwater. Waterlily water symbolism was used to mark the Underworld as a location, not merely to serve as a transitional layer between the Middle and Underworlds." The Chocholá lords thus reside within the underworld at the moment of depiction. Their setting is marked as such by the waterlilies and water dots that surround them; with the addition of non-waterlily flowery imagery it would seem that this particular space can be further connected with the flowery realm Taube mentioned. Indeed, in a recent paper dealing with Maya concepts of the sea, Taube (2010) argued that the flower road connected with the sun and ancestral figures can also be aquatic as well as celestial, in conjunction with the solar passage though the sea and underworld. The appearance of the young lord through the watery/flowery cartouche makes visually concrete the fact that he behaves properly, as a lord should, which, in turn, enables him to communicate with the gods/ancestors.[183]

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[183] There are four examples that do not place the bust of the young lord in a cartouche. They still clearly participate in the same iconographic complex, however. The first (fig. 72) represents a figure with a rope necklace, a jaguar headdress connected to a waterlily flower and a nose attachment. The individual in the second piece (fig. 73) is not connected with waterlilies or water generally, but he does have a nose attachment, a headdress that contains a standardized flower and is reminiscent of the Maize God in the way it flips down in front of his face, as well as blood dots or scarification on his cheek. In the third example (fig. 74), the young lord wears a goggle-eyed headdress indicating central Mexican influence. The youth also holds a snake that arches up over his head and, with the crossed bands along its body, almost certainly represents the sky serpent (see Carlson 1988; Houston 1984; Schele and Freidel 1990: 52). Interestingly, more rigidly geometric flowers—whose form likely mimics central Mexican styles in

It is not surprising that the only three vessels to utilize a different type of cartouche take the form of the God H or Wind God variant. As Taube (2004a) noted, flowers and wind are often interconnected—flower earspools 'breath,' wind can be described as flowery, etc. One of the Chocholá figures placed in a calendrical cartouche carries a waterlily in his hair while the other two wear the bound headband and one even displays the *ik* sign associated with the Wind God (figs. 16, 75, 76). Yet another example explicitly includes God H clearly wearing the diagnostic bound headdress terminating in a flower on the forehead (fig. 77). Thus, wind and aquatic imagery is continued, even in the choice of appropriate calendrical markers.

In the preceding discussion, I have argued that the isolated busts scenes are the result of legitimizing programs in which living individuals presented themselves in autosacrificial poses and in connection with mythological entities. In my view, these depicted actions reified the individuals' power by enabling them to access the watery flowery world of the ancestors and deities. As the Tikal Burial 116 bones suggest, in most images from the Maya world, human likenesses placed in floral cartouches may allude to past individuals, or ancestral figures, who now inhabit a heavenly setting. The floral frame then acts as a portal through which the dead can access the world of the

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accordance with the reference found in the headdress—are attached to this serpent as well and probably refer to the flowery complex discussed above. Finally, an unusual example (possibly Chocholá related) presents a young lord in full regalia (I would like to thank Erik Boot for my attention to this piece). This character is perhaps the hardest to relate to the types of iconography seen in typical bust images. He wears a god-mask headdress, a necklace of multiple strings and a flower earspool. His headdress contains attributes from various deities (like an eye scroll), but its main component seems to be the upper jaw of a serpent (indicated by a supraorbital plate and the way the first fang fits into the jaw apparatus). At least one serpentine being (now bearded to provide a mirror complement to the avian creature appearing above it) also occurs at the back of the headdress assemblage. The young lord's face seems to have a blood scroll associated with the lip (although it is abbreviated in nature) and his clothing (or chest) is marked with small crosshatched areas. If serpent references and blood scrolls are indeed included, then the connection between this scene and the Isolated Bust group is clear. It is just as likely, however, that this particular image provides a direct connection to the seated and standing lords to be discussed next and, while taking the form of the bust, is instead meant to simply glorify the figure of the young lord.

living. There is no reason to assume that such portals were unidirectional, however. Several pieces of evidence support the view that at least some of the Chocholá busts represent living entities in contrast to dead forbearers. Bloodletting, for instance, is explicitly emphasized in a number of examples and implies that the living individual awaits access to the world beyond, in contrast to Maya depictions of ancestral behavior. Furthermore, the portrait heads are varied and individualized in many cases, which suggests that they behaved as actual likenesses rather than generalized ancestral types.

The accompanying texts specifically name particular individuals and may provide further support for the view that these entities represent living people instead of mythological characters. The elites whose names occur in the inscriptions certainly typically played a role in either the creation or the possession of individual pots and it might be easy to discount such nominal tags at first as simple references to either owner or patron. In other representations of humans in the Chocholá corpus, however, captions that name the individual pictured are inserted into the scene itself (e.g. fig. 17), indicating that such images specifically act as portraits. Furthermore, in the case of the bust trope, the selection of diagonal texts places the individual's name next to the portrait with a directional reading order that further connects the two. While reading order adheres to standard conventions, the glyphic text in such cases (e.g. figs. 9, 16, 41) takes a columnar format that leads the reader from the top left to the bottom right and, at the point where the text and image are closest to one another, includes a personal name. Similar orientations connecting iconographic elements and specific glyph blocks frequently identify a perceived interrelationship between the two, as on Naranjo Stela 22, where the volutes from K'ahk' Tiliw Kan Chaak's headdress hit the associated inscription precisely at the phrase *u baah* ('his portrait/his body,' see Chapter 5), while the double-headed serpent bar that he holds in his role as a ruler touches the last glyph in the inscription, the Naranjo emblem glyph. Significantly, not only does K'ahk' Tiliw Kan Chaak's name phrase follow the *u baah* glyph block in the carved text, it also appears in the headdress that is linked to the portrait expression via volutes (Houston, Stuart and Taube 2006: 64). Additionally, in one self-referential example from the Chocholá corpus, the text on a

'poison bottle' (fig. 41) identifies its function as the tobacco container of an elite woman. The corresponding image pictures the bust of an individual surrounded by tobacco leaves in what seems to be a direct portrait of the woman named in the text. The fact that the busts of young lords can also appear in *ajaw* calendrical signs further supports this suggestion, as living kings often used such imagery to express their power over time.

The foregoing evidence sustains the idea that, in the Chocholá bust trope, living individuals assert their rightful place in Maya social hierarchy through their actions and abilities as made visually apparent by their appearance in a fluid portal. If we invert this interpretation and see them as ancestral figures instead, the message—that certain individuals have the power and privilege to commune with past leaders/supernaturals—remains the same but is less forcefully executed. In this case, the owners of such ceramics demonstrate, time and again, their connection with past leaders. They do so by possessing objects depicting portals through which the viewer sees and, in some sense, interacts with a past, dead lord in the process of emerging from his (or her) place in paradise. In my view, however, such portraits depict the living lord. Thus, not only do the young lords who possessed such vessels demonstrate their connections with the ancestors and other supernaturals by presenting themselves in the moment of transition, they actively initiate that contact from the earthly side of the portal.

While the representations that make up the Isolated Busts category vary greatly, there are several ceramics that are so iconographically and stylistically consistent that they must have been made by a group of artists working at a single site. Five pieces (e.g. figs. 9, 34, 68) display similar cup-like forms featuring a young lord wearing an anthropomorphic headdress and nose attachment. In three out of four examples, the jaguar headdress is prominently featured while the fifth takes the form of the deer head that appears elsewhere in the corpus.[184] Furthermore, three of the young lords also hold

[184] The fifth vessel remains unpublished currently and resides in Museo Regional de Yucatán, Palacio Cantón storage (see footnote 186).

the digging stick/scepter, while the fourth seems to hold a smaller, more pliable object that may represent a plant stalk.[185]

The stylistic similarities are just as striking. In three out of four examples, for instance, the headband tie appears stiff and the exact manner of representing the tie is duplicated in all cases as a U shape rotated ninety degrees counterclockwise (figs. 9, 34, 68). One of these loops (fig. 68), however, leads into a knot that takes a more truncated form. It is framed on either side by the lines of the headdress while the other three exhibit a softer curve and overlap with the headgear so that the line of the underlying headdress structure is visible at exactly the same spot under the tip of the curved loop in each case. It is precisely this type of small, almost inconsequential feature that is most likely to show the evidence of an individual artist's hand (see Chapter 3). Because these elements could vary without changing the exact nature of the visual message projected to the viewer, their form likely reflects a lack of conscious thought and thus represents the individualized motor skills and habits of a particular artist (see Chapter 3; Tate 1994).

Given the consistency in detail just mentioned, the first two examples (figs. 9, 34) were probably made by the same hand. Similarities in the use of text further corroborate this identification; both exhibit incised glyphs and almost exactly the same glyphic forms were selected in each case. A different hieroglyphic sequence appears on the fourth vessel (fig. 68), however, and the entire string was set into the vessel so that each glyph block was carved in high relief (in contrast to the incising just mentioned). The clear iconographic and stylistic correspondence between this piece and the others support the suggestion that while several were made by the same hand, all were made in close proximity to one another, i.e. in the same location.[186]

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[185] If the object is indeed a young plant, then it is closely associated with the digging implement featured in the other four examples, as has already been noted.

[186] The fifth vessel named (see footnote 184) above extends this pattern. The wrapping of the headdress worn by the figure in this case displays a slightly different aesthetic. The rendition of the fabric ends seems to indicate greater pliability while the artist completely omitted the knot; indeed, the manner in which the loops are secured to the basic headdress form is completely obscured. Here too, the craftsman chose to use crosshatching in both the cartouche frame itself and in the background, while such visual

Another example (fig. 71) diverges from the core set of features; the vessel shape differs and many details in the representation of the young lord deviate from the typical manner of presentation identified above. The stylistic correspondences between the cartouche and the figural representation, as well as the iconographic similarities (the appearance of the digging implement) suggest that the person who made this pot was closely related to the producers responsible for the other four vessels, both geographically and sociopolitically.[187]

## *Scene 1b: Lone Lords*

While busts of young elites were clearly favored by Chocholá artists, full-figured representations also occurred with some frequency. As a group, they represent approximately 22% of Scene 1 ceramics and 12% of the Chocholá image corpus. This group is much less homogenous than representations of torsos in cartouches, however, which probably reflects multiple centers of production. Scenes can range from the presentation of a single individual standing by himself to the depiction a lone figure interacting with various objects.

Three pots present standing figures. I provisionally mentioned these vessels while discussing the Lone Lord because of the similarity in the use of accoutrements in one case (fig. 53) and the obvious presentation of a young lord in the others (fig. 78). These examples are highly unusual and were created in a related type, however, rather than

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details do not appear in the four cases. Still, in a larger stylistic sense, it (like fig. 68) demonstrates such a striking resemblance to the other three vessels that it was likely created in dialogue with the others, which implies a strong connection in the place of origin.

[187] Two of the ceramics that present the lord's bust in a flowery cartouche (figs. 63, 64) may also indicate the work of a single group of artists. While high resolution images of both examples are unavailable, the basic shape of the flowery cartouche, the exact manner of framing the individual, the use of the net shirt, and the fact that the young lord holds the same thing in both cases (again, a vegetal-like element) implies a single location of manufacture.

actually being part of the Chocholá style.[188] The iconographic form is highly abbreviated in the first piece (fig. 53) while in a second, unpublished vessel from Museo Regional de Yucatán, Palacio Cantón storage, the lord bears elite regalia, including a netted ruff, pectoral, feathered headdress and elaborate belt with waterlily attachments and what are probably meant to be trophy heads. Both containers place the standing figure in a frame, typical of the Chocholá style, but the border is rigidly rectilinear as opposed to the more standard, modified geometric frame popular in Chocholá examples. Rim bands exist in both cases too, and run up to the scene in a manner less common within the corpus. The figural style employs thicker, yet more compact body proportions that lie outside typical Chocholá frames of reference (although the Museo Regional de Yucatán, Palacio Cantón example does recall the surprisingly small waist seen in other scenes of young lords). Only one vessel (fig. 78) picturing a standing figure seems to more securely relate to the Chocholá style, as indicated by the rim band that exists independently of the scene and the rubbing of the carved areas with cinnabar. Even so, the modeling used to create the constituent items in the scene, the relative lack of depth in the carving (or molding) and the elongated shape of the container all suggest a closely related style instead of any direct connection with Chocholá characteristics. The figure bears all of the typical lordly accoutrements: a feathered headdress and an elaborate belt assemblage including a K'awiil head at the back, along with earspools, a flowery pectoral and ankle ruffs. The various disjunctions I have noted above may simply indicate the existence of a secondary or tertiary center of production, but they seem to indicate separate, if related traditions of manufacture. Given the uncertainty that surrounds these three pieces, I simply include them to indicate the possibility of a standing figure type as a subset; as the corpus grows, this can either be discarded or expanded accordingly. In any case, the three vessels just mentioned emphasize an elite status complementing the other Chocholá pieces in the human figures category.

[188] Dorie Reents-Budet (2009, pers. comm.) suggested that one (fig. 78) be connected with a Campeche locus of manufacture based on figural proportions, etc.

On those vessels that are securely identifiable as Chocholá, seated figures occur repeatedly. While this set of ceramics varies internally in vessel form, iconographic inclusions and stylistic appearance, enough commonalities exist to make such a grouping possible. Characteristic of the Young Lord Scene as a whole, most of the figures have simplified costumes. The seated individual usually wears his hair tied up behind his head in such a way that part of his forelock is separated from the main mass and falls forward in front of his face (see fig. 79; this is also true of one of the standing lord examples [fig. 53]). Simplified headdresses and/or headbands typically follow this same basic form; the hair is tied back and either bound or connected to feathers while another bundle of feathers extends over the forehead and curves around in front of the face (see fig. 14). As with the Isolated Busts Scene, this treatment can recall the appearance of the Maize God. One piece (fig. 80), for instance, incorporates cartouche-like elements in front of the figure, which may include representations of corn kernels directly linked to the individual's forehead. In most of the vessels displaying such imagery from both this scene category and that discussed earlier, however, the visual parallel is just that, a parallel, with no overt Maize God reference; the general form may be meant to indicate the youth of the protagonist. Occasionally the artist chose to depict slightly more elaborate head-gear, as in another example (fig. 81), where the upper jaw of a serpent forms the main part of the headdress but, like explicit Maize God imagery, this is rare. Some of the young lords might also exhibit Wind God attributes. On yet another vessel (fig. 82), for example, the young lord wears a waterlily headdress while holding a stylized serpent head in his right hand.[189]

When seated or partially seated figures are shown, Chocholá artists followed conventional Maya rules of representation and typically chose to render them in full profile (figs. 29, 80). A frontal view with the head placed in profile also occurs with a

[189] The authenticity of this piece (fig. 82) has been questioned over the years (Matthew Robb, Saint Louis Art Museum 2010, pers. comm.), due to its unusual appearance. Such stylistic disjunction may be connected with a subsidiary production location instead of resulting from twentieth century craftsmanship, however, and I include brief mention of this example for that reason.

fair degree of frequency (figs. 79, 82). In addition to the head or hair treatment and the use of beaded bracelets, anklets and necklaces or pectorals, Chocholá artists also used deportment and location to indicate an elite context. While the image focuses on the central figure, a few additional details often provide further support for the upper-class status of these characters. The lords, for instance, can sit on a bench/throne (figs. 81, 82) or cushion (fig. 79). Additionally, the protagonist can make sophisticated gestures (fig. 81), gaze into a mirror (fig. 79), or, in one particularly detailed example (fig. 83), hold a giant waterlily blossom in front of a mirror.[190] In this last vessel, a glyphic caption appears that reads **u-ba-hi** *kalomte'* followed by another title, probably *bakab*. The text thus refers to this individual's image (i.e. portrait) and then provides his titles, both of which are common throughout the Maya area.[191]

While ceramics in this sub-category carry text, the scribes used pseudoglyphs in a few cases. All of the vessels that include texts and that can be connected with an Oxkintok locus of production exhibit literacy and an intellectual approach to the dedicatory sequence (Chapter 5). Pieces that incorporate pseudoglyphs exhibit a desire to replicate such markers of prestige by artists who lacked the ability (or, less likely, the time and the desire) to construct texts that are actually legible. This, combined with other stylistic differences (in figural proportions, for example, e.g. fig. 81), further supports the idea that pieces with unreadable dedicatory formulae were created in satellite centers. The stylistic variants that suggest multiple production sites are, for the most part, well represented in the current corpus as a whole. The fact that few repetitions occur within this scene category underlines the popularity of the seated lord image. The appearance of visual alternatives, however, also implies that few of the core production centers valued this particular iconographic feature. Two vessels can be connected with core site styles (figs. 29, 83), however, as I discuss in later chapters, and iconographic inclusions

[190] This piece (fig. 83) is also unusual in the sense that the exact nature of the action is unclear; the figure seems to hold aloft a waterlily blossom on a stem, but the gesture and pose strongly recalls that of scribes in the act of painting.

[191] The first title—*kalomte'*—indicates extremely high status and also can be found on ceramics from the Petén (see Chapter 5; Geunter 2009; MacLeod and Reents-Budet 1994: fig. 4.28).

associate this group with the larger Young Lord scene set. Not only do all the ceramics mentioned here depict young lords, waterlilies also occur with a fair degree of frequency and the iconographic choices demonstrate a corresponding preference for watery imagery. Furthermore, one vessel (fig. 29) provides close parallels to the bust images containing deer and jaguar headdresses mentioned earlier. In fact, the odd, half-seated pose of the full-figure lord provides the only reason for connecting it with this category instead of the bust group. Therefore, as this example in particular demonstrates, while the two scene types fall into two different conceptual groups, they are closely thematically and iconographically linked.

### *Scene 1c: Conference and Multiple Figure Scenes*

As with the previous sub-grouping, the vessels in the Conference and Multiple Figure iconographic category display a great deal of variability.[192] Within this grouping, however, the heterogeneity reflects a nuanced approach to subject matter rather than strong stylistic disjunction (although multiple centers were certainly responsible for the production of individual pieces). Pots can be grouped into two, possibly three basic sets; most frequently represented are conference scenes wherein a young lord interacts with another character. One (fig. 45) or two (fig. 48) scenes can appear, for instance, and the scribe often inserted glyphic captions as well. The scene text begins with a simple *u baah* phrase—'it is his image'—and then provides general titles like *bakab*, thus asserting the high status of the main individual (fig. 45).[193] In addition to the standard

[192] Scene 1c accounts for approximately 7% of Chocholá imagery.

[193] The first title occurs with great frequency in the Chocholá corpus where it syllabically looks like **ma-bu-?** but other representations of the glyph prove that when fully spelled in the hieroglyphic record it reads *kalomte'* and functions as a high-status marker. Typically such a glyphic caption would refer to the most important character—the young lord at the left of the scene. In this case, though, the connection is a bit ambiguous. The headdress of the smaller individual to the right touches the glyphic block, a visual device commonly used to show a connection between the text and figure. While the

manifestation showing two figures facing one another, two examples portray the bust of a young lord in one scene while a deity figure appears in another scene on the opposite side of the vessel (figs. 27, 47). Finally, deities and humans develop a complex series of interactions in other representations (see fig. 55 for a related example).

The conference scene sub-grouping serves to indicate the elite nature of the principal figure. He wears an elaborate headdress in several examples and his size and the fact that he sits on a cushion or bench/throne marks his position of power. While dialogue occurs in all examples and is often expressly indicated through the use of hieroglyphic captions, the presentation of an offering (or tribute or exchange wares) frequently takes center stage. This offering is manifested in several different forms including a bowl and lidded, cylindrical jar (fig. 48); a flat, flaring dish (or mirror?) (fig. 15) or a bundle of feathers (fig. 21). The images do not present enough information to allow the specific identification of liquid or food items. Certainly, however, such gifts reasserted the lord's control and prominent position. The presentation of bundled feathers, for instance, seems to refer to the exchange of luxury goods, especially since it involves not only the lord himself, but also a figure that Ardren (1996: 243) identified as part of a merchant class of traders. The feathered cap and rich robe made of plaques speaks to this 'trader's' elevated socio-economic status (although he is still socially inferior to the young lord who sits above him and towards whom both he and the tiny dwarf look). The high class trader acts as a foil for the more powerful young lord, whose paramount position is reiterated in the caption text naming his portrait: **u-ba-hi** *kalomte'*, 'it is his image, *kalomte*'.'[194]

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iconography is not clear in this case, it seems that he is also portrayed in the act of speaking and his speech scroll touches the glyph block, which may indicate that the attendant speaks these words about the young lord seated in front of him. In the unlikely event that the attendant is smoking a cigar instead of speaking, the titles may (atypically) refer to his social status instead of the lord's. In any event, the youthful character at the left of the scene is clearly presented as the most important figure, with a status higher than that of the small person to the right, due to his larger size, etc.

[194] The 'images,' or portraits of the other figures also seem to be named, although the nominal texts are not readable at the present moment. The captions provide some

Two vessels explicitly provide a palace setting for such interactions, as the curtains draped along the top edge of the image indicate (figs. 15, 48). The same artist created both pots—not only are the figures stylistically similar in both cases, the ceramicist also chose to include curtains not found elsewhere in the Chocholá corpus. Furthermore, both pieces include extremely similar texts that incorporate the God N dedicatory glyph typical in ceramic dedicatory formulae but extremely rare in the Chocholá style (see Chapter 5). Thus the Conference Scene ceramics, as a group, reflect a series of typical political relationships involving the gifting of luxury goods or presentation of tribute.

The second sub-scene variation does not demonstrate sociopolitical relationships; it focuses instead on deity associations. The less frequent use of this combination, limited to only two representative examples (figs. 27, 47), may indicate its lesser success as an iconographic sub-set, provided that the current sampling is representative. The isolated images are typically Chocholá, however. In one (fig. 47), a young lord wears a nose attachment and a rope tied around his neck. He holds waterlilies and sports the large, wide brimmed hat usually associated with God L. Indeed, the additional inclusion of two dots on the figure's chin and a large nose attachment may indicate that the person wearing the hat is actively trying to impersonate God L. The darkness of the background (symbolized through crosshatching) furthers the God L association given his connection with the shadowy underworld (Taube 1992: 79-81). The other cartouche provides surprisingly different, yet congruent imagery. Here a monkey appears, decked out in a death eye ruff with additional death eyes sprouting from his head. A dark (i.e. crosshatched) cartouche, again marked by what seem to be death eyes, defines his space, thus indicating that the simian resides in the underworld. While at first glance this may seem unusual, since the monkey is not a typical associate of God L's, this creature often has connections with the underworld (Benson 1994: 141-142; Taube 1992: 88). Although human beings impersonate deities rarely in the corpus, God L and the monkey

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information regarding the visitor but I cannot suggest a reading for these collocations at this time.

were repeated subjects (although rarely presented together on the same pot or in the same manner) and God L was particularly popular, as will be demonstrated shortly.

The other vessel displaying two different scenes with two different characters also presents typical Chocholá iconography (fig. 27). On one side, the familiar form of a young lord is again visible, while an insect appears in the other scene. The elite wears a flowery headdress and the only difference between him and the other high-status individuals already discussed lies in the fact that his breath is marked by a scroll that takes up a large portion of the left side of the image. The other character may relate to the hunting deity Wuk Zip. He bears the deer ear commonly associated with that entity (see Taube 2003). Here then, instead of a human character taking on God L characteristics and accompanied by a creature commonly associated with the scribal arts and status as well as the underworld, the human is linked to another deity with important ritual implications.

I tentatively include a third series of interactions in this section. I am hesitant to categorically incorporate all of the following vessels into the Chocholá corpus because the imagery often takes up much more of the vessel wall than is typically seen in Chocholá examples. The filling of space and multiplicity of interactions also proves somewhat atypical in the current corpus. The depth of carving and the separation of scene panel from vessel wall and hieroglyphic strings falls in line with Chocholá aesthetics. For this reason, I include them here, even though they may have participated in a closely related system of stylistic expression instead.

This last set of images also incorporates a series of interactions in two different scenes, each filled with multiple figures. Unlike the variety of subjects evident in other pots from the Conference Scenes and Multiple Figures group, several examples revolve around the deer hunt ritual often depicted on Classic polychrome ceramics and alluded to in monumental carvings (Taube 1988, 2003). In one Chocholá example (fig. 84), the hunting god Wuk Zip wears deer horns and blows a shell trumpet into what seems to be a Pax head (Taube 2003: 474-475). In the midst of this action, the hunter emerges from another animated head—probably also an anthropomorphized Pax tree (see Callaway

2006: 33; Taube 1988: fig. 12.6c)—visible in the lower right (note, for example, that Wuk Zip's ankle seems to be firmly grasped in this head's mouth; see Callaway 2006: 33).

The blowing of the shell trumpet may indicate the initiation of the ritual activity. A torch illuminates the scene while a small deer carrying a bundle on its back looks on. On the other side of the vessel, a human figure wears a vulture headdress and wings on his arms. The vulture impersonator has subdued and is about to sacrifice an anthropomorphized deer that bears a striking resemblance to Wuk Zip (in addition to the god marking on the right forearm of the 'deer,' note the shape of the head, the location where the antler is attached to the cranium, the floppiness of the deer ear and the slightly distended belly common in Wuk Zip representations; see Taube 2003: especially 74). Appearing to the right of the image, God K accompanies the avian impersonator and his tongue reaches out to touch the beleaguered Wuk Zip. As a whole, these paired scenes present the aged hunting deity, a swooping vulture and a deer sacrifice.

Another piece (fig. 55) shows a different moment in the ritual action: apparently the captured deer has already been sacrificed, as Coe (1973: 126) suggested. This deer lacks antlers and has a gourd (presumably for water) and net fabric strapped to its back (Coe 1973: 126). The youth holds the deer around the neck and gestures with his left hand. For the ritual, he has tied his hair up into a ponytail and wears a simple, though flamboyant headband terminating in two long strips of cloth that wind their way through the scene. The elaborate yet loose nature of the hair treatment may visually parallel the antler hairdos that humans sport in other examples of the deer sacrifice theme (see Taube 1988: 333). On the opposite side of the container, a peccary appears, also with eyes closed, but he apparently still lives, given the large gusts of misty breath emerging from his nostrils. He bears a *k'in* glyph on his back and a large serpent floats just behind him.[195]

[195] The snake could actually be a centipede given the emphasis placed on the fanged mouth. It would also relate to the serpents found in other Chocholá scenes, especially since what seems to be a shell emerges from its mouth (see Scene 2d).

The presence of a deer, combined with the appearance of the old, deer-eared hunting god immediately recalls other images of deer sacrifice. Taube (1988, 2003) has examined scaffold scenes centered around deer victims and has concluded that they allude to a larger complex of sacrificial and martial as well as agricultural symbolism. A denizen of the dangerous wilds, the aged Wuk Zip often grasps a demoralized deer in Classic Maya imagery (Taube 2003: 466-471, 473). As already noted, the old deity appears with deer in Chocholá iconography and the insect nature of the entity with Wuk Zip characteristics in the first example (fig. 27) may relate to its connection with the forest as a dangerous locale.[196] A vulture also occasionally hovers over lords associated with scaffold sacrifice imagery and, in a ceramic example, a human sacrificer impersonates a vulture (Taube 1988: 338, 343).

The Maya deer hunt encompasses several different narrative stages; the deer must be captured and then killed. Sacrificial scaffolds "portrayed symbolic forests" and thus, when the deer appears on a scaffold, the image at once connects the animal's death with untamed, uncivilized spaces while at the same time providing a "metaphorical context" for human sacrifice (Taube 2003: 477). Even in the absence of an explicit scaffold, deer hunt imagery can be connected with this set of associations (see Taube 1988, 2003). The acts of war necessary for obtaining prisoners and the killing of those same prisoners is couched in symbolic language that links hunter with deity and deathly action with ominous setting, all of which are controlled and structured by the lords who employ such visual devices.

The repeated use of the Pax head in the aforementioned Chocholá vessel complements such imagery (fig. 84). As Taube (1988: 335) has noted, "by the Goodman-Martínez-Thompson correlation, *Pax* occurred in midwinter during the Late Classic (Morley 1956: table X). This would be the ideal time to engage in warfare and raids in order to secure prisoners, for it would be after the harvest and before the planting." He further suggested that the anthropomorphized Pax tree is one of sacrifice, in connection

[196] As Taube (2003: 477) stated, in discussing dangerous animals associated with the forest, "in Yucatec belief, sorcerers summon diseases from the underworld in the form of particular insets and other small creatures (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 178)."

with scaffold imagery, and that the rituals surrounding it were connected with "renewal" as well as marking accession to kingship (Taube 1988: 337, 346).[197]

Young lords can also take the place of the victim inside the scaffold. Much like the young lords in the lone bust scene, the elite at Piedras Negras, for instance, alluded to their own bloodletting actions: "the scaffold sacrifice was possibly regarded as the *acante* of the lord, his place of personal bloodletting" (Taube 1988: 346). Additionally, while forest spaces are fraught with peril in ancient and modern Maya thought, they also provided rulers with one aspect of their power—in braving such threatening places, "Maya rulers had the special ability to journey to the forest and distant lands," moving through the "landscape as fierce beasts guarding and extending their domain" (Taube 2003: 480-481).

Furthermore, celestial imagery complements the deer hunt/sacrifice in one of the carved examples (fig. 55). Michael Coe (1973: 127) suggested that the imagery might refer to a Cakchiquel story that "on a short day the sun is drawn across the sky by two deer, whereas on long days two peccary pull him." He went on to say that since death is indicated in at least one case, the sun may instead be the "night or Jaguar Sun of the Underworld" (Coe 1973: 127). Freidel, Schele and Parker (1993: 82-85) later proposed that the peccary/serpent image actually showed that Gemini and Orion, in the form of the peccary, are located on the ecliptic (the snake); in other words, they supported Coe's original assumption that the peccary, combined with the *k'in* glyph, indicated the sun's path across the sky.

The complex of hunting references, in conjunction with the appearance of Wuk Zip, alludes to a political power nexus based on a larger set of sacrificial associations. In this context, the young lord can impersonate either Wuk Zip himself or the deer or the enigmatic vulture who also occasionally appears in such settings. Regardless of the

[197] The rituals surrounding the Pax tree and the killing of a victim did not necessarily take place in the month Pax, however, as Taube (1988: 340) notes: "Although the scaffold rite has clear affinities to the sacrificial symbolism of *Pax*, it should not be assumed that the Classic ceremony was performed during this month. The Classic *Pax acante* suggests that the scaffold sacrifice might have been held near or during the *Uayeb* period."

specific nature of the interaction, the Chocholá image sequences legitimize elite power by metaphorically connecting deity and lord with a series of bloodletting activities revolving around deer/prisoners. In addition to the sacrificial reference contained in the deer hunt iconographic theme, such scenes may also have been linked with agricultural fertility. As a whole, then, the Wuk Zip/deer imagery in the Chocholá corpus supports the power statements made in other sub-categories. While the scaffold does not appear in Chocholá scenes, the reification of elite status rests on the visual metaphor drawn between sacrificial deer/prisoner and hunter-lord. In this context, it is significant that a polychrome vessel from Calcehtok (right in the middle of the Chocholá production zone, see Chapters 6, 7) represents the ritual hunt complete with hunter, captured deer, shell trumpet and Pax tree. Not surprisingly, given the conceptual link between the ballgame and warfare, ballplayers, another typical Chocholá inclusion, often wear regalia that connects them with hunting and wild animals like deer and jaguars (see Hellmuth 1991; Taube 2003).

### *Scene 1d: Ballplayers*

Like the first sub-grouping discussed, this scene is highly repetitive though less frequently utilized (it only occurs approximately 8% of the time). A lone ballplayer in the midst of hitting the ball off his waist appears over and over again and acts as the diagnostic feature for identifying this scene (see fig. 85). In only one case is the young player accompanied by (two) spectators (fig. 86). All of the gamers take the stereotypical pose associated with the sport—the right hand and hip rest on the ground while the left leg is drawn up towards the body and the left arm stretches out behind the figure. The ballplayer, in displaying such theatrical action, is one of the most dynamic figures in Maya art. In Chocholá examples, the quick movements of the figure in question are indicated, time and again, by the curvature of the feathers in the headdress or by the loincloth, which seems to fly out behind the individual. Interestingly, however, while

both feathered headdresses and loincloths always appear, usually only one seems to be affected by the wind created by the ballplayer's passage (contrast fig. 85 with fig. 87, for example).

In six out of eight examples, a stepped ballcourt is clearly represented in miniature (and may indicate the use of a ritual or symbolic ballcourt). Unlike the famous "six-stair place" mentioned at Yaxchilan and other sites,[198] the actual number of risers seems inconsequential and ranges from three to five.[199] Chocholá artists often chose to include the ball itself, typically inscribing it with a hieroglyphic tag. In such representations, the ball's name refers to its size (given in hand spans; see Tokovinine 2002; Zender 2004). In one example (fig. 35), the ball is labeled **9-na-bi** in an unusual spelling of *9 nab*. In this case, the down-turned grasping hand—**NAB**—seems to have a reversed orientation so that the thumb appears on the left (contrast with Zender 2004: figs. 1b-c, 2, 5a, b).[200] In fact, most Chocholá ball labels demonstrate non-standard spellings, although the number nine characterizes all such tags (see figs. 17, 87). Nine hand spans is, in any case, a typical ball size in Maya inscriptions and indicates that these implements were approximately 24 inches in diameter and around 77 inches in circumference (Coe 2003: 200; Zender 2004: 3). Additional hieroglyphic captions indicate that the gamers were historical individuals. In-scene texts occur in four examples; while the names are often hard to decipher, the *bakab* title occurs repeatedly

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[198] For a discussion of the "six-stair place" at Yaxchilan and other "false ballcourts," see Freidel, Schele and Parker (1993: 239, 351-353). Even when the scribes specifically named the ballcourt as a "six-stair" location, the number of stairs could vary; in the Panel 6 representation of play from Yaxchilan, for example, the text mentions the six-location, but the actual number of stairs in the pictorial version of events has been reduced to three (see Freidel, Schele and Parker 1993: fig. 8:16a).

[199] "Three-Conquest" was another popular way of describing ballcourt locations, sometimes in reference to the number of stairs, as Nikolai Grube (cited in Freidel, Schele and Parker 1993: 254) argued at Naranjo and Freidel, Schele and Parker (1993: 355, see also 239) suggested for Yaxchilan.

[200] If Tate's drawing (fig. 17) is accurate, then one of the vessels that explicitly names the powerful Oxkintok lord also includes an unusual collocation—**9-k'i-ba?**—to name the ball.

and the Oxkintok king, **OHL-si-?-TOK'**, is also identified (please refer to Chapter 5 for a further discussion of the hieroglyphic sequences).[201]

While the stance of the ballplayer and his setting remain consistent throughout, the exact details of his costume vary. The belt assemblages and loincloths are fairly constant but the arm protectors can either have ruffs (figs. 25, 26, 35) or knots (figs. 17, 85) or a simple wrapped configuration (fig. 87). The leggings also range from simple to complex (compare the lack of detail in fig. 85 with the faces represented in fig. 17), but the basic form remains the same in all cases. In fact, the headdress changes shape and form most frequently in this scene. Three of the players wear hats associated with God L (figs. 17, 85, 87), and central Mexico is recalled in the goggle eyes worn just under the brim in two cases. Jaguar or, more frequently, bird heads, with feathered backs, can take the place of the God L hat (see figs. 26, 86).

While much uncertainty surrounds the exact nature of the ancient Maya ballgame, the fact that actual ballcourts, as well as pictorial representations of players in action, appear across the entire temporal and geographic extent of Maya civilization (and indeed across Mesoamerica generally) attests to its importance in ritual and political life (Blom 1932; Graña Behrens 2001; Miller 2001; Miller and Houston 1987; Orr 1997; Schele and Miller 1986: 241-264). It is not surprising, then, that Chocholá artists, as a complement to the popular bust scenes, chose to create a number of vessels focused on elite individuals in the midst of play. Not only did the ballgame have connections with ritual forms of warfare and sacrifice as well as the demonstration of power, it incorporated further links to agricultural fecundity and associated mythology (Miller and Houston 1987; Orr 1997; Zender 2004). Ethnographic accounts of origin myths recount epic struggles in both 'real world' and underworld ballcourts (see Christenson 2003) and Classic Maya rulers played as important deities related to regional founding stories (Tokovinine 2002; Zender 2004: 5-8).

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[201] I use the term 'caption' loosely here. I do not mean to suggest that the text included in the image actually refers to the action depicted. In most cases it simply names the individual pictured and does not actually provide a written 'narrative.'

Sacrificial victims often take the form of the ball in Maya iconography and the victorious lord can bounce the captive/ball off the court walls in a humiliating display of relative prowess. Thus, the lord as ballplayer asserted his position of power both through an expression of physical prowess and through a reification of important ritual precepts (Miller and Houston 1987; Schele and Miller 1986: 246). In this way, gaming imagery provides yet another type of visual message parallel to those found in the bust scenes: both reinforce political supremacy.

The Chocholá use of the ballgame theme may do more than simply portray the ruler as physically and politically powerful, however. It might also underline lineage ties and thus legitimacy through connections to an established dynasty. Ballgame equipment and even the balls themselves might have been passed down over generations (Schele and Miller 1986: 245). Furthermore, at Yaxchilan, for instance, the ballgames played by several generations of kings are celebrated on a single monument as a way of expressing continuity in rule (Tokovinine 2002: 3 and figs. 5a, b).

Scholars have frequently discussed the ritual context of the ballgame, even when specific dynastic referents are lacking (see Graña Behrens 2001; Miller and Houston 1987; Schele and Miller 1986; Tokovinine 2002; Zender 2004). Several have noted the visual distinction between ballcourts with smooth, sloping walls and representations of play in stepped locations. Schele and Miller (1986: 247) and Coe (2003) have argued that the two settings point to different types of games. Schele and Miller (1986: 247-248) go on to suggest that the difference lies in the role fulfilled by each particular event rather than in a quintessentially different way of playing. Given the significant number of images that depict bound captives as bouncing balls (or at the very least in ballgame/court contexts), they suggest that the stepped courts were specifically associated with ritual activity frequently involving the sacrifice of captives.

Miller and Houston (1987) have expanded on Schele and Miller's ideas by convincingly proposing that the image of a lord bouncing a captive-as-ball off a stepped location actually refers to a larger complex of actions. In their eyes, images of games at stepped courts "are associated with the final act of the ballgame, the sacrifice on

stairs…citing not the play in ballcourts but the sacrificial dénouement of the cycle" (Miller and Houston 1987: 55). Such representations "perhaps conflat[e] the separate events of battle, ballgame, and sacrifice" connected with fertility as a "ritual of kingship" regardless of whether the ball actually took the form of a prisoner or was rendered simply as a spherical object (Miller and Houston 1987: 55, 58-59). Indeed Miller and Houston (1987) note that overt sacrificial references are generally absent in the ceramic corpus in contrast to the many depictions of captives-as-balls in the monumental record. Perhaps Maya artists did not see the degradation associated with the carved stone raisers (the lord literally steps on the sacrificial victim every time he ascends the staircase) as an appropriate theme for the ceramic medium, which required a very different series of interactions. Regardless, Chocholá artists continually chose the stepped location as a backdrop for the king's actions and thus probably linked this particular form of the ballgame with far reaching statements regarding his proper ritual behavior and resulting position as rightful ruler.

In a ritual context, specific gods were connected with the ballgame in ancient Maya thought. While the person pictured in Chocholá representations of the ballgame is undoubtedly a young lord, many of the supernatural ballgame 'patrons' appear (although not in ballcourt contexts) in other examples. Chocholá artists repeatedly chose to depict the deer-eared old god, for instance and possibly the Jaguar God of the Underworld, as well as the waterlily serpent.[202] In doing so, the ceramicists seem to indicate a complex web of interconnections across Chocholá iconographic programs. The individual representation of historical figures at play would seem to simply mark a particular, politically important temporal moment in the elite individual's life. When the set of other vessels related to the ballgame complex are considered, however, it becomes clear that Chocholá artists conceived of such historical action as a complement to the young lord portraits viewed in the watery underworld. Isolated supernatural patrons abound, for instance, and in many cases, such figures are rendered as iconic forms. Instead of

[202] See Tokovinine 2002 and Schele and Miller 1986: 252 for the identification of these entities and their connection with ballgame activity and patronage.

alluding to a narrative event, mythological or otherwise, they typically appear in decontextualized settings and thus function as signs. Because of their behavior as signifiers, they immediately allude to the supernatural aspects of ballcourt ritual. Thus, when the ballplayer imagery is understood within the larger Chocholá corpus of representations, the young lord as athlete legitimizes his position of power not only through the celebration—in a semi-permanent, highly social form (i.e. ceramics)—of his politico-historical actions, he also asserts and maintains his place as the intermediary between real-world and supernatural contexts in addition to placing himself in situated action connected with creation events.

The popularity of the ballgame trope suggests that it functioned successfully as a way of conferring and projecting prestige upon the person depicted (and the actual owner in cases where the two were distinct). As several pieces demonstrate, the message seems to have been developed by a small group of Chocholá potters working in concert with one another and under the patronage of a single lord. In fact, given the marked consistency displayed by the ballplayer pots, a number of these vessels were almost certainly made by a single artist while others seem to have been created by a close-knit group of craftsmen.

Five examples incorporate hieroglyphic captions in the same manner (figs. 17, 25, 26, 33, 35). In each case, the scene's textual tag occurs in the upper left corner and takes a geometric form, often further framing the young lord so that additional space was provided for the incised caption, even though it was often not needed (see fig. 35). The work of a single hand is most apparent in two of the examples (figs. 26, 35), due to the correspondence of the glyphic forms and words in the incised text as well as the apparent use of the same term to name the ball. The regular, rectilinear form of the syllables in the dedicatory formula ringing the vessel's rim in each case further connects another vessel to this group (compare figs. 33, 35) as does the particular use of certain syllabic forms (e.g. the **u** composed of two squared-off circles containing dots on the right side and parallel lines on the left). Another piece (fig. 25) seems to have been created by the same scribe as well, based on apparent similarities in the incised captions, but this

identification is tentative until the actual vessel is viewed. A fifth example (fig. 17), is connected to the four already discussed through the form of the incised caption, the naming of the ball and the use of crosshatching behind the main figure, marking these as nighttime events. The hieroglyphic captions are different enough from a stylistic point of view, however, to suggest that this pot was created in close proximity to the other four, but not by the same artist.[203]

Another closely connected group of ceramicists were responsible for the creation of two more vessels (figs. 85, 87), based on the similar use of headdress, the lack of a crosshatched background and the fact that the player's right leg is curled up underneath him so that the foot is not visible. Perhaps the clearest indication occurs in the way the right hand is curled in on itself, so that only one finger extends, while the entire hand breaks the scene boundary in both cases, as does the left foot on the other side of the image. The thickness of the hands might even seem to result from the same idiosyncratic motor skills. The slight stylistic differences in representing knots and facial features, however, suggest that these examples were created in a connection with one another rather than by the same artist. If this is true, then the last piece (fig. 86) really stands out as an anomaly. The ballplayer's body exhibits a different set of proportions than those provided by either of the two artistic groups identified here and the text and scene caption are also stylistically unusual. Thus, a third entity seems to have created at least one pot exhibiting a Chocholá ballplayer; while the similarities evident across the vessels produced by the two groups first identified seem to imply that they worked in relative proximity, the differences exhibited by this third piece (a different way in incorporating a

[203] In fact, due to the facility with which movement, detail (especially in the incised glyphic tags) and facial features are rendered, this vessel may very well have been created by the master artist in the scribal community. Interestingly, this figure, identified as the Oxkintok lord, provides the clearest example of the crab-claw gesture (commonly associated with rulers holding double-headed serpent bars), even though the arms are drawn out and away from the body. At least three of the other four examples copy this gesture in the way the left hand is rendered.

hieroglyphic caption, the proportionality of the ballplayer, the inclusion of spectators, etc.) might indicate a geographically and sociopolitically distinct group.[204]

## *Scene 1: Overview*

Scene 1, as a whole, incorporates a wide variety of imagery while sharing a common focus: each example rotates around the figure of the young lord. Often simply dressed but with rich finery like nose attachments and elaborate headdresses, these characters assert, time and again, their rightful place in the world. They maintain their positions precisely because of their proper behavior—bloodletting—and their concomitant ability to access other realms, their sociopolitical and/or socio-economic interactions and their observance of ritual. Furthermore, the various deity associations found in this context indicate that potters encoded yet another level of meaning in the imagery they chose, connecting the youthful individual with supernatural attributes and/or powers, like dominion over time, for instance. As such, the Young Lord categories laid out above provide a testament to each youthful ruler's power and pride of place.

## *Scene 2: Deities*

As a group, scenes containing deities and/or supernatural creatures are slightly less common than those depicting young lords (approximately 47% of Chocholá images

[204] Such difference may not, in fact, indicate a different location of production, but rather a different artistic solution to rendering such a popular subject. The dramatic stylistic disjunction between the choice of the calabash shape and the smooth walled cup with imagery does not mark disparate centers of manufacture, for instance, as I show (Chapters 3, 5).

focus on supernatural entities). I have identified six sub-scenes within the larger deity category:

a. God L
b. God K/K'awiil
c. Disembodied Heads
d. Serpents and Other Watery Beings
e. GI and the 'Paddler Gods'
f. Miscellaneous Deities
g. Miscellaneous Animals and Animal Supernaturals

While these groups combine to create a large scene category, each individual set contains fewer examples than the most popular Young Lord sub-group, the Isolated Bust scene. Adding to the relative heterogeneity evidenced by the deity/supernaturals category, each sub-set contains a large amount of additional information. Many include other protagonists but have been named according to the figure that receives the most focus. Thus, while God L may appear with the head of God K on his back, as Tate (1985) and Ardren (1996) pointed out, God L is the central figure and vessels carrying this image will be classed accordingly. As the example just provided indicates, in addition to including multiple referents, each of the six different groups I have identified here overlaps with other sets in one way or another. God K, or K'awiil, for example, appears in at least two other scenes in addition to the one that takes his name. God L and other entities like monkeys were also popular iconographic tropes. The categories I have established are thus arranged according to such interdependencies and their order of appearance here does not necessarily reflect a greater number of examples in the individual set (statistics will be given as appropriate). As with the Young Lord Scene, however, there are a few basic commonalities shared by all Chocholá ceramics in the Deity Scene. In most cases, the image focuses on a lone figure. References to other gods may be made but they usually appear as part of the main deity's dress assemblage rather than standing on their own.[205] As with the scenes depicting humans, figures rarely interact in a narrative schema. If the artist represented two different entities of equal

[205] When the lone figure takes an anthropomorphic form, he (or she) typically appears in a seated pose.

importance, he usually created two iconographic panels so that each entity inhabited its own space.

### *Scene 2a: God L*

Scenes featuring God L are by far the most numerous of the deity scenes, accounting for approximately 29% of supernatural scenes and 13% of those Chocholá vessels that exhibit any type of imagery. This particular scene group also exhibits the most consistent use of trickle paint additions, almost certainly due to the attributes of the god depicted. Despite the recurrent nature of God L imagery, this sub-scene presents a relatively heterogeneous body of representations that connect the deity with both life and death. Indeed, in the Maya pantheon, God L has a multivalent nature that explains his connection with the underworld and concurrent association with riches, water and agricultural fertility (Bernatz 2006: 82-83, 101; Taube 1992: 79-88).

The general appearance of this supernatural figure is consistent both within the Chocholá style and northern sculptural traditions as well as Maya material culture generally. He appears as an old man with a prominent chin, a squared eye and hook nose, wearing a wide brimmed hat surmounted by feathers (see figs. 54, 67, 88). A Muwaan screech owl completes the headdress assemblage (Taube 1992: 79). Because of the distinctive black feathers of the Muwaan (Taube 1992: 81), Chocholá artists typically applied black trickle paint to the hat, feathers and cloak worn by the god.[206] Jaguars are also commonly connected with God L and while references to felines rarely appear in Chocholá depictions of the deity, God L sometimes sits in front of a jaguar pelt cushion like those associated with royalty in palace scenes (Bernatz 2006: especially 49, 82, 146; Taube 1992: 81, 85). He also occasionally displays the blackened visage found in other God L representations (Taube 1992: 79).

[206] See Bernatz (2006: 168-175) for further discussion and identification of the bird associated with God L.

While the old god is easily recognizable in the Chocholá corpus, he appears in association with different objects and/or supernaturals. The old god can be represented by himself, for example (fig. 88), holding a variety of objects or with such items placed by his side. In one case he holds a God K head up as if presenting it (fig. 20). In other instances, he holds his traditional bundle (e.g. fig. 65).[207]

While God L is occasionally associated with death symbolism like death eyes and a black house, Chocholá artists also included mercantile and water references. The piece (fig. 65) that shows the most typical form of bundle includes another scene of God L on the opposite side. In that manifestation, he spills water from a full container so that black drops cascade down toward the ground register.[208] The fact that Chocholá artists specifically painted the water black (using trickle or post-fire paint) may result from its connection with the primordial waters as depicted on polychrome pieces (see Kerr Database: K1609). Interestingly, God L wears different clothing in each of the Chocholá scenes; he sports his traditional cape as he reaches out to grasp the merchant bundle, but when he spills water from an open container he appears bare-chested, in a rope skirt. The use of trickle paint on the blank areas between scenes in the God L ceramics may further such a connection between this entity and both rain and agricultural fertility. In several cases, the artist chose to paint geometric patterns that take the form of stylized flowers. In one example (fig. 88), an additional visual correspondence links the painted designs on the plain surfaces of the vessel and the God L representations (of which there are two, in this case). Volutes surround the deity and trickle paint has been used to indicate water dots along these scrolls, clearly marking them as misty or watery scrolls and visually

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[207] In an example closely related to the Chocholá style, God L holds a staff (fig. 89); Taube (1992: 81) identified this staff type as the precedent for later *chicahuaztli* rattle staffs popular in Post-Classic Mesoamerica. According to Taube (1992: 81), early examples of the staff type are associated specifically with Terminal Classic Yucatán, but the fact that this vessel strongly resembles the Chocholá style implies a temporal connection as well, which, in turn, seems to connect the use of the rattle staff with a slightly earlier time frame in the north.

[208] This is not unlike representations of the *imix* sign with dark water flowing from it; see Taube (1992: 84, fig. 40c).

linking them to the lines of spots associated with the painted flower shapes (see also fig. 90).[209]

The watery and flowery symbolism not only complements standard God L imagery, it also parallels the series of iconographic forms found in the oft-repeated bust scene. Watery spaces defined by swirling volutes surround young lords in this context, while potters often marked the aquatic location of God L by including the same dots found carved into the young lord scene frames. What is more, in the case of God L, the black post fire paint used to create the water circles creates a strong color contrast between the iconographic forms and the clay surfaces upon which they appear (see fig. 90). The visual emphasis on the trickle paint watery and/or flowery symbolism creates a dialogue between the God L representations and the scenes of busts. As in the Isolated Bust scene, the flowers connected with God L also take one of two standard forms. First, they can occur as part of the carved imagery (fig. 91). When the artist first carved the iconographic element and then painted it, the flower can take waterlily form. Second, abstracted flower types often occur on the blank walls between images (fig. 88, 92). Such designs never appear as waterlilys, instead recalling the more generic floral imagery found when a young lord appears as the 'face' of a flower (see figs. 63, 64). Thus, the painted additions clearly mark the location of the god as flowery and/or watery, thereby linking his spatial position with that accessed by the young lords in the aquatic/floral cartouches. Such iconographic interchange between the two scene types is not surprising. These two image tropes were by far the most popular among Chocholá artists, who chose to represent either the deity or human portraits approximately 40% of the time (approximately 13% of all vessels displaying imagery focus on God L, while 27% incorporate young lord busts)!

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[209] God L also appears in two slightly different guises on another piece currently housed in storage at the Museo Regional de Yucatán, Palacio Cantón (vessel number 10-383116); while the long beak of a nose and squared eye are evident in both, one panel emphasizes his age while he seems to take on a more youthful appearance in the other. Unfortunately, the advanced state of erosion makes it difficult to identify the exact series of actions presented here, although the deity gestures and wears different regalia in each panel.

In addition to such pronounced watery/flowery symbolism, God L often appears with the head of God K (K'awiil) perched on his back, as both Tate (1985: 129-130) and Ardren (1996: 241) noted (see also Bernatz 2006: 18). Ardren, following Taube's (1992: 79) discussion of the God L/God K relationship in the Venus pages of the Dresden codex (where God L spears God K), suggested that these scenes depicted a later part of that mythic struggle. While this is certainly possible, K'awiil's association with royalty, lightning and rain may better explain his presence here (Bernatz 2006: 112-113, 140-141; Taube 1992: 78-79). Furthermore, K'awiil is frequently connected with the mercantile aspect of God L. As Miller and Martin (2004: 63, emphasis in original) noted, in relation to a painted vessel scene, God K appears

> …in the court of God L, negotiating or receiving instructions, while gesturing toward an anthropomorphic cacao tree in the plaza beyond…. On capstones from Yucatan and Campeche, K'awiil carries sacks of beans, specified in the accompanying texts as containing cacao…. On a now-lost lintel from Chichen Itza, K'awiil rises up from a *cenote* bearing the pods.

The fact that God L asserts the object-hood of God K by holding the deity head by its earspool in one example (fig. 91, which also includes a God K head on God L's back) would seem to support these associations. The exact manner in which the deity head attaches to God L's cape is not clear and in some cases, God K simply seems to float behind God L while looking in the opposite direction.

Given the connections between God L and God K, the head associated with the old deity in the Chocholá examples must be K'awiil, as other scholars have suggested. A close consideration of its appearance, however, reveals that many of the diagnostic, Classic period traits associated with the god are missing. Smokey imagery always appears, but gone is the smoking axe or torch in the forehead. Taube (1992: 69) suggested that Classic versions of K'awiil include the smoking forehead implements while Post-Classic images tend to omit these forms. The Chocholá style seems to indicate a bridge between the two eras. In one case, God K has the torch typical in Classic period representations (fig. 66). In others, however, he exhibits smoke volutes but no torch or axe (akin to Taube's [1992: 69] identification of Post-Classic God K

traits), along with a more naturalistic set of teeth (also thought to be temporal marker). In some cases, these emanations do not seem to come from just the forehead (see figs. 67, 91, 92). Occasionally, too, while the god head must be that of K'awiil, the snout turns down rather than up (fig. 67).

In a recurrent permutation of the God L theme, the deity wears all of his regalia while at the same time clearly bearing a knotted rope around his neck (e.g. fig. 67). The significance of this rope is perplexing, since it is not commonly associated with the god. Such binding does seem to be a common Chocholá theme, however, given its widespread use not only in the God L scenes but also in those depicting young lords. The use of the rope necklace may, in some way, refer to the humiliation of God L at the hands of the Moon Goddess (or Sun God) and rabbit (see Taube 1992: 85-88), but such a connection is unlikely given that the old god still possesses all of his regalia.

Occasional waterlily imagery appears as well. The volutes associated with the God K burden carried by God L turn into explicitly rendered waterlily blossoms in three examples (e.g. figs. 67, 91).[210] While Maya representations of God L frequently omit flowery references, the use of a waterlily is in keeping with the traditional Maya conception of the deity in this case. As Taube (1992: 84) noted, when discussing the Dresden Codex title for God L that is prefixed by droplets falling from an *imix* sign: "A representation of a water lily flower, the *imix* sign is a well-known water symbol, and it is probable that the black dots represent falling water or rain."[211] The use of waterlily blossoms in Chocholá representations of God L also fits with the general emphasis placed on that flower in the larger corpus.[212]

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[210] Tate (1985: 129) also suggested that the cape worn by God L sometimes "functions polyvalently as a water lily pad and turtle shell." As Kerr and Kerr (2005: 5) have indicated more recently, however, God L's cape probably contains a direct allusion to the shell of an armadillo rather than that of a turtle or, at an even further remove, a waterlily pad.

[211] See also Bernatz (2006: 13).

[212] As in the Bust Scene, stylized flowers also appear; not only are they included in the trickle paint inclusions as already noted, one four lobed flower has also been carved into the space in front of God L's face (fig. 92); this flower 'breathes' (see Taube 2004a) the volutes that commonly occur in this location.

Even though God L is a popular figure within the Chocholá body of images, the potters delighted in variety.[213] Not only does the deity take many different forms, even the way of separating the scene from the vessel wall differs widely within this sub-grouping. While most include volutes that set the main image off from the blank wall on both the left and right hand sides (much in the way the Young Lord scenes are differentiated from their grounds), many ceramics display the rectilinear frame instead. Multiple panels also occur more frequently here than in any other grouping. A few vessels even combine imagery and a striated vessel body, which demonstrates the connection between the image-based versions of the Chocholá style and those examples that only contain glyphic text strings. One piece (fig. 54), for instance, places two simplified forms of God L in separate, ovoid frames, while vertical lines decorate the wall of the vessel. Such visual detailing recalls the calabash-shaped bowls connected with a standard rendition of the Chocholá dedicatory formula. Another vessel (fig. 90) evokes this form even more directly through the modeling of the surface in between the God L figures.[214]

No single artistic hand can be identified in the representations of God L. There are a few examples that indicate a shared aesthetic, however, which almost certainly reflects the work of a scribal group. The modeling, figural arrangement and iconographic

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[213] God L can also interact directly with other entities. God L only appears as the focus of this interaction in one example, however, currently in storage at the Palacio Cantón (vessel number 10-383119). In this instance, the artist emphasized the centrality of God L by placing him by himself (easily identified by his hooked nose, cape and the presence of the Muwaan bird) in one of the two scene panels. In the other scene panel, however, God L (the larger of the two figures) has left his cape and bird behind but still bears a large, hooked nose and prominent chin. The second character, with whom God L speaks, cannot be identified at this time.

[214] This vessel breaks one of the stylistic 'laws' associated with Chocholá production; the rim line and text, here elaborately decorated with trickle paint, runs into the scene panels instead of appearing in an isolated band above. While this treatment would normally suggest a related style, I identify this pot as Chocholá due to the highly standardized treatment of God L, the stretched-square form of the glyphs and the use of molded calabash-like striations that mimic those found in the Stylized Calabash Category. The overlap between the glyphic and image sections probably reflects the intermediary nature of this piece, which combines two very different aspects of the Chocholá corpus.

choices made by the artists who created two other ceramics (figs. 67, 91), for instance, implies that the potters responsible for each piece were aware of one another's work.[215]

A single group of artists experimented with patterns connected to Chocholá aesthetic expression while avoiding canonical forms. Two pieces, for example, use a continuous line to form both the upper limit of the scene and the lower edge of the rim band and the glyphic forms run up to the scene in one case (fig. 93). The carved aesthetic (i.e., the use of a rectilinear scene filled with the portrayal of the deity) and subject matter connect these scenes with the Chocholá style while the flatness and greater use of incised line, as well as the direct iconographic similarities exhibited by another non-Chocholá piece seems to reflect an individual school.[216] The variety displayed by these different groups as well as that exhibited by ceramics that cannot be grouped based on the style of manufacture and image treatment indicates a far-flung network of artists. The consistency of the God L representations, including the widespread use of the knotted rope neck treatment and the occasional waterlily, also implies an expansive system of communication within a larger, geographically dispersed artistic community.

## *Scene 2b: God K/K'awiil*

God K heads occur by themselves as well as in association with God L (fig. 94).[217] K'awiil's full-figured form appears only rarely, however, and the serpent leg is

[215] Another artistic group seems to have created at least two God L vessels (now both stored at the Palacio Cantón) in a regional variation of the style. Scene panels and vessel shape indicate that one (vessel number 10-383116) should be classed as Chocholá. While the other (vessel number 10-383119) utilizes a different vessel form, the quality of paste, the proportions and appearance of the deity and the pseudoglyphic texts indicate the use of similar manufacturing precepts, probably developed in dialogue with the first (vessel number 10-383116).

[216] I would like to thank Erik Boot for showing me an unpublished photograph of this vessel.

[217] God K heads make up approximately 8% of the corpus.

never included (fig. 31).[218] In one of the instances where the god head appears by itself, it has waterlily associations. The preference for, and emphasis placed on, the waterlily trope in other scene categories explains its appearance here. As in God L/God K representations, scrolls of fire or smoke spew out from the forehead region (although a specific torch or axe is missing in two examples).[219] In several cases, the smoke has been modified to incorporate watery references, including the aforementioned waterlily blossom.[220]

The similarity between these supernaturals (both in partial and full-figured form) and the disembodied craniums in the God L/God K scene just discussed allows the isolated heads seen in two examples (figs. 31, 94) to be identified as K'awiil. Smokey and/or watery volutes lacking further iconographic markers (like axes or torches) spring forth from the forehead region and curl back on themselves in front of the face in all cases.[221] The square eye also appears, as does the odd, down-turned nose. Some of the stand-alone heads, as with the God K heads they so resemble in the God L/God K scenes, may even reflect a composite nature.[222] The same manner of presenting the nose and

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[218] Several ceramics rendered in related styles show a full-figured K'awiil (or K'awiil/Chaak composite) (see Kerr Database: K8119, K6958).

[219] In one piece (fig. 94), these volutes even originate from an oval shaped device connected with the forehead; this may be the God K mirror, although it does not look particularly reflective. The crosshatching may reflect a 'darkened' mirror, although such an identification is far from certain.

[220] This is particularly true of a vessel currently housed at Dumbarton Oaks; I would like to thank Alex Tokovinine for showing me a photograph of this piece.

[221] The lack of any specific iconographic forehead forms may reflect a movement toward later iconographic traditions that affect K'awiil representations. As Taube (1992: 69) noted, "During the Post-Classic period, God K lacks the cranial axe and serpent foot of the Classic deity." We do see other, Classic period images of the god where the definitive forehead axe or torch is missing, despite the appearance of volutes; the secondary inscription on Dos Pilas Stela 25 incorporates just such a K'awiil head (see Stuart 1988: 192, fig. 5.22).

[222] Down-turned, pendulous noses are more typically connected with Chaak rather than God K (Taube 1992: 17). The Chocholá entity also displays a beard in many cases, which may be a substitute for the more common fish barbel found in Chaak representations. In other Maya depictions, at least one early example incorporates a beard instead of the more typical fish barbel, which Taube (1992: 23) suggested might act

scrolls in both scenes, combined with the lack of attributes suggesting another identification, indicates that these images must refer to K'awiil. God K is typically connected with the royal line, rain and agricultural fertility (Taube 1992: 69-79). Holding and drinking from vessels with such imagery may even parallel (though certainly in diluted form) the use of the K'awiil scepter in monumental art. In both cases, the physicality of the God K containers is emphasized and the Chocholá examples quite literally place the image of the deity in the hand(s) of the drinker.[223] As with the God L images, very few can be connected with either a single artist or a single scribal group with any certainty, although one (fig. 94) may have been created by the same artist responsible for two others (figs. 67, 91).

### *Scene 2c:*
### *Disembodied Heads*

Other types of disembodied heads were chosen about as often as the isolated K'awiil images and appear approximately 4% of the time with three representative examples. In this group, other entities often accompany a supernatural, who they usually treat like an object (witness, for example, the way two hands hold up the head in

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as a precursor to the standard fish symbolism. Thus, some Chocholá artists may have purposefully used archaistic references. The Chocholá examples may also relate to the long nosed creatures that decorate many of the later architectural programs in the Puuc region, although these entities are commonly connected with spatial referents (i.e. anthropomorphic mountains).

[223] As David Stuart (2005a: 28) noted, the "common spellings of the 'God K-in-hand' accession glyph read *k'am* k'awiil, or 'the K'awiil-taking.'" Thus, the taking of the K'awiil scepter signifies the ruler's rise to kingship. While I would certainly not suggest that cups or vessels decorated with K'awiil's visage fulfilled exactly the same function, holding (and drinking out of) containers displaying such elaborate iconography demonstrated an elevated sociopolitical status. The selection of God K imagery may have simply further connected the owner with the highest of the elite—the lord—just as that lord's repeated use of the K'awiil scepter signified his official position of power.

presentation, fig. 3).[224] Waterlilies appear in all cases, while one scribe also chose to include more generic water symbolism—dots of ascending and descending size. In one instance, the cranium exhibits a skeletal lower jaw and emits circular forms commonly connected with death eye representations (fig. 60). This cleft head creates a base for a cartouche holding a large waterlily blossom on which a dwarf plays a shell trumpet.

In other vessels, the supernatural creature is variously associated with corn, water, smoke and waterlily blossoms (fig. 3). While they are not K'awiil heads, the craniums share some similarities with Chocholá versions of God K; smoke and/or corn or water scrolls issue from the forehead (and are even connected with a mirror-like device in fig. 3). The entity depicted in these examples seems to be strongly related to that shown in association with the dwarf. Indeed, they provide the greatest visual parallel across examples, but the brow dips down over the eye in the dwarf case (fig. 60) as well. Furthermore, a series of dots frame the eye at the bottom and a curl usually appears in the center, as is typical of supernatural heads in general. The eye can also include a small area of crosshatching in the interior, a Chocholá trait not commonly selected but most evident in one of the three pieces (fig. 95). In all cases the top of the head also splits into two (or sometimes three) 'branches' connected with circles and waterlily blossoms.[225]

This type of head recalls the exuberant, stylized faces that split at the crown and grow into waterlily stalks and/or maize foliage. Such cleft heads occur on painted and carved vessels (see Kerr Database: K626, K2571, K4572, K4705, K4957). In many cases skulls or allusions to bones appear, although youthful representations were also employed. The added maize symbolism may indicate connections with the young Maize God; in a Maya monochrome, for instance (see Kerr Database: K762), a naturalistic

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[224] One (fig. 95) of the three examples is less 'disembodied' than the others. Here the supernatural clearly is attached to a body—the shoulder disappears behind the cartouche created by the watery scrolls emanating from the his forehead and his hand is just visible in the lower right hand corner, thus mimicking the otherworldly setting of the Young Lord Bust scenes. It clearly belongs in this sub-scene, though, given the similarities it shares with the other two figures, as will be discussed shortly.

[225] In one case (fig. 60) these circles are reminiscent of death eyes, but the other two belie such an association and seem to be connected with sprouting instead.

version of the young Maize God's head appears on top of water stacks with waterlily vines and blossoms sprouting from his head.[226] This iconographic trope obviously relates to scenes of emergence, given the cleft in the crown and the watery associations. Such disembodied entities also seem to be connected to the institution of kingship and some may be identified as the Jester God (see particularly fig. 95), given the typical foliation of the brow and its tri-lobed appearance in two of the vessels (see also fig. 3 and Schele and Miller 1986: fig. 43 for comparison).

Linda Schele and Mary Miller (1986: 46) have identified the 'Waterlily Monster' complex, which includes a cleft-headed entity. Hellmuth (1987: 156-157, see also 105-107,138-159) encouraged a more nuanced view of this creature by further distinguishing between it—the "Tubular Headdress Monster" in Hellmuth's terms—and the full serpentine form of the "Lily Pad Headdress Monster" (an entity who also appears in the Chocholá corpus, as I discuss in the next section). While Jester God attributes abound in several examples (figs. 3, 95), I also connect these entities with the head found on another piece (fig. 60) and associate all three with waterlily creatures generally—each series of cranium divisions terminates emphatically in waterlilies and what probably represent foliating seeds.[227] As Schele and Miller (1986: 46) noted, the waterlilies connected with

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[226] A fourth vessel provides a somewhat unusual example of a related head (fig. 96). I have not discussed it here, given its abnormal character (it appears that the entire uncarved surface of the pot has been painted), thus, while it displays some stylistic characteristics associated with the Chocholá style, I hesitate to include it in the current corpus (the flatness of the carved surfaces and the paucity of deeply carved background spaces also supports such differentiation). A lone head appears in two scenes. The head splits and the 'branches' turn into vines that sprout foliage. Instead of the typical waterlily imagery, however, this vegetation seems to represent cacao pods. Cacao trees have been linked with the Maize God in past representations; Taube (2004a: 79) tentatively identified the male figure/cacao tree on the Early Classic Death Vase as the Maize God (see Taube 2004a: fig. 9a).

[227] While Chocholá artists predominantly chose to portray God K with God L, a few examples may instead refer to Hellmuth's "Tubular Headdress Monster." The head that God L holds and faces in one instance (fig. 91), for example, splits into 'roots' that end in a waterlily flower and seed. The disembodied head on the Dumbarton Oaks vessel mentioned earlier sports a feather or fin-like fringe attached to the forehead while waterlilies emerge from in front of and behind the face. In more traditional God L/God K

such depictions symbolize "standing bodies of water" and can be used to indicate the fecundity of the earth.[228] The terrestrial association acts in dualistic opposition to Chaak's "celestial rain" (Ishihara, Taube and Awe 2006: 214). In these pieces, Chocholá artists used images related to still waters as a way of indicating not only a transitional space leading to the Underworld, but also the Underworld itself. Thus, the Chocholá heads most likely mark a supernatural location in the same way that the watery cartouches marked with such flowers indicate the Underworld location of the young lords in scenes of humans (see Schele 1988: 301-302).

The context in which the heads appear solidifies the link between the different spaces inhabited by the human and the divine and the theme of emergence. In the Chocholá Disembodied Heads Sub-scene, one vessel refers to ritual processes (the blowing of the shell trumpet, see Bézy 2006) while others indicate agricultural (specifically maize) associations. All seem to portray liminal (i.e. in-between, transitional) spaces. The dwarf emphasizes his liminality not only via location—he lies on a waterlily pad in a cartouche emanating from a split skull—but also through his action—blowing a trumpet. Schele and Miller (1986: 303, 308) suggested that the sound of the trumpet summons the "vision serpent." Taube (2003: 427), however, proposed that the serpents connected with the use of shell trumpets instead signified the "symbolic breath or wind of the conch," which could be visually connected with "a floating ancestor with a breath serpent before the face." In the most general sense, the sound of the shell trumpet suggests the ephemeral and ritually permeable boundary between the human and the divine. The heads seen here are certainly not serpentine in nature, but they, like snakes, serve to mark a transitional space. In the piece just discussed, the playing of a trumpet (in a cartouche) further indicates an otherworldly quality, while the crosshatched background in the other two examples alludes to dark spaces. The fact that disembodied hands present the cleft head in one instance while the Jester God/waterlily head appears

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and isolated God K images, however, the head clearly can be identified as K'awiil (e.g. fig. 20).

[228] Other investigators have identified this particular type of waterlily as the *Nymphaea ampla* (Dobkin de Rios 1978; Emboden 1982).

through a watery cartouche in the other further creates a sense of transition. The exact significance of these vessels within the larger Chocholá corpus is unclear. Given their focus on other spaces, however, they undoubtedly refer to a series of activities closely related to the subject matter already discussed in conjunction with the Young Lord categories. The occurrence of Jester God attributes also clearly relates to the institution of kingship generally and, as such, plays a part in the legitimizing role such vessels served.

## *Scene 2d: Serpents and Other Watery Beings*

The serpentine figure that winds its way across the sides of pots is another characteristic Chocholá iconographic form. While at first glance it may seem as if all these aquatic entities are the same, in reality Chocholá artists depicted several different watery creatures. They all relate to one another, however, as visual parallels indicate. In general, the supernatural creature fills the scene and artists accordingly selected a blank background. The head always occurs at the left side of the panel and faces left while the body curls up behind it, creating an upside down U shape frequently topped by a tuft of feathers (see figs. 59, 97). More frequently, the pristine, unspeared body exhibits further undulations, curling in circles in the middle portion of the scene or literally tying itself in a knot (see figs. 4, 98-100). The creature itself, while always acting as the focal point, can appear as a vehicle for emergence with a humanoid head popping out of its jaws or it can simply exist on its own. Despite these dramatic visual correspondences across vessels, however, certain key diagnostic features indicate that Chocholá artists used multiple watery entities within this general iconographic set.

While many are clearly serpents, Tate (1985: 126-127) was correct in identifying a mythic narrative referred to in the representation of what she called the "Slayed Fish Monster." More recently, Quenon and Le Fort (1997: 886) rightly stated that the representation of such amphibians actually derived from a combination of fish and

serpent characteristics and that individual artists could choose to emphasize one over the other. In the Chocholá sub-set, ceramicists focused on serpentine aspects although a few fish-like elements also occur.[229] In contrast, fishy characteristics appear repeatedly in painted ceramic traditions (see Kerr Database: K595), where craftsmen often depicted the entity with fins instead of a feathered ruff. The visual similarities across such carved, incised (see Kerr Database: K1391) and painted wares are striking and indicate that potters referred to the same supernatural creature in all three variations of the ceramic medium. In Chocholá examples, a head variant (figs. 59, 97) appears in the other scene.

Quenon and Le Fort (1997) and Taube (2004a) have called attention to an analogous example of the watery fish-snake from a polychrome vessel (see Kerr Database: K595), which contains additional narrative imagery. In analyzing representations of the Wind God, Taube (2004a: 74-76 and fig. 4d) described the painted scene as depicting "a mythic episode concerning the capture of the Wind God…. In this scene, an anthropomorphic Chaak grasps the long hair of the Wind God, who emerges from a fish. This scene clearly denotes fishing, with another fish held between the legs of the captor." Earlier, in considering that same pot, Quenon and Le Fort (1997: 887) suggested an alternate hypothesis. According to their analysis, the Maize God emerges from the fish in front of the god GI, who plays the role of captor. The hank of hair falling in front of the face of the young deity emerging from the fish almost certainly led Quenon and Le Fort to the Maize God hypothesis. As Taube (1992: 56-59) pointed out in his discussion of the Wind God, however, the Maya commonly connected the Waterlily Serpent with wind rather than corn. According to Taube, the "God H appellative glyph serves to name a water serpent with the face of Chaak…. The aquatic [or waterlily] serpent of the accompanying scene wears what appears to be a headdress of a bound water lily pad. The front of the headdress displays the same beaded knot found in the

[229] The tail of the serpent separates into two, fin-like curls. While this attribute is associated with fish (see Hellmuth 1987: 105-107), it can also be seen at the ends of other tails in the larger Maya vase database (see Kerr Database: K4188 and K1231).

name glyph of God H."[230] In illustrating his point regarding the use of the Waterlily Serpent as one of the Wind God head variants for the number 13, Taube (1992: fig. 26b) included a drawing of the head in the left panel of a Chocholá piece (fig. 97).[231] This is clearly the same head that appears a second time, with slight variation, in the left panel of another vessel (fig. 59). The use of a more typical form of the 'Waterlily Monster' head in this case visually contrasts with the waterlily entities found in the Disembodied Heads sub-scene while at the same time connecting them based on parallel iconographic tropes. Such resemblances may to indicate that the two entities act as essentially similar types of creatures (see also Ishihara, Taube and Awe 2006: 214). The waterlily-marked cranium seen in association with the fish-serpents has lost all the Maize and/or Jester God attributes seen in the other examples. In both cases, the head variants bear what seem to be crab legs in their headdresses in addition to the diagnostic knotted waterlily pad headdress. Not surprisingly, this entity has crab associations when it appears elsewhere (see Thompson's [1950: 145] comments regarding monuments at Quirigua).

In addition to the head seen in the left panel on the two examples just mentioned, Quenon and Le Fort (1997: 887) attempted to connect the speared fish entity in the right panel with the Waterlily Serpent, suggesting that the upturned snout functioned, iconographically, as a waterlily pad. While tempting, given the visual connection between the waterlily-bedecked head variant and the fishy serpent in the Chocholá examples, such an identification proves suspect. Indeed, the long proboscis emanating from the snout of the serpent is a frequent occurrence in Maya art and does not always refer specifically to vegetation (see Kerr Database: K531; all animals in this Chocholá sub-set also exhibit the large snout). Dark circles mark this elongated element, suggesting the *akbal* sign, an indication of darkness. In the three Chocholá vessels that present the speared fish-serpent, the circles have been replaced with the crosshatching

[230] The interrelationship between Chaak and this watery entity is particularly evident at Early Classic San Bartolo, where the two are combined or "conflated" (Ishihara, Taube and Awe 2006: 215).

[231] It has long been recognized that the 'Waterlily Monster' could stand in as the number 13 or the Tun sign in glyphic texts (see Hellmuth 1987: 138; Ishihara, Taube and Awe 2006: 214; Miller and Schele 1986: 46; Thompson 1950: 145).

that also often marks waterlily pads, hence Quenon and Le Fort's suggestion. While the iconographic element has changed, the general association with darkness, as opposed to the more specific roughness of the waterlily pad, remains. Two of these vessels represent the elongated portion of the snout in a rectilinear form (figs. 59, 97). This shift in tradition (a tradition clearly followed by the majority of Chocholá artists, as can be seen in the depictions of other snake or snake-like creatures; e.g. fig. 19) may stem from the desire to allude to waterlily imagery without actually including overt waterlily symbolism.

While I cannot categorically identify the speared amphibian as the Waterlily Serpent despite its clear connection with what Hellmuth (1987: 138-145) labeled the "Lily Pad Headdress Monster," more can be said regarding this serpentine-fish being. In considering the parallel, painted example, Taube (2004a: 74-76) said little about the 'fish' from which the Wind God emerges, but even a cursory survey indicates that it also appears in the Chocholá pieces under discussion. Yet another polychrome example, originally illustrated by Coe (1975: Plate 11) in his consideration of pottery at Dumbarton Oaks, shows the same snake-like creature. In this case, a jaguar entity (possibly the Jaguar God of the Underworld) spears the aquatic character while residing in the same watery space and accompanied by another deity figure (GI?). All snaky beings have beards and carry tufts of feathers on their backs. The diagnostic snout containing a circle with crosshatching also occurs (or is quite literally blacked out in the example provided by Coe). Crosshatching marks the fish's body in Chocholá vessels and while the body only carries watery circles in Taube's example, the tuft of feathers associated with the creature indicates crosshatching. Additionally, the serpentine entity has a tooth-filled jaw surmounted by scaly markings.

Clearly, the polychrome vessels and the Chocholá pieces picture the same creature. The Chocholá examples typically omit both of the deity figures, however, although Chaak's (or GI's) spear remains, embedded in the snake-like body. Thus, the Chocholá images seem to depict a complementary scene that marks the moment after the

fish/Wind God grouping has been captured/speared.[232] Interestingly, while the Wind God has disappeared, the supernatural maw remains open and, in one case (fig. 59), presents a circular object surrounded by scrolls. This item is marked with water droplets and has been identified elsewhere as a piece of shell (Quenon and Le Fort 1997: 887).[233] Given the specific allusion to water, the connection between the spearing of the fish and the bringing of rains that Taube (2004a: 76-77) proposed remains consistent.[234] The Wind God has disappeared from the mouth of the fish-serpent, but the presence of the Waterlily Snake/number 13 head provides a variant of the deity (or at the least, a complementary entity) in the opposing panel.

In the third example, the missing spear and the fact that the head of the full-bodied creature hides most of the serpentine undulations makes a secure classification impossible and an iconographic connection between the serpentine head and the fish-serpent entity tenuous (fig. 101). The use of the crosshatched proboscis (in contrast with the more typical circular inclusions), along with the beard and fish-like barbels at the corners of the mouth imply congruent imagery, although in this case the entity seems to

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[232] Taube interpreted another speared fish in the late Post Classic murals at Mayapan as, in Stuart's words, the "primordial watery creature…killed in order to create the surface of the world" (pers. comm. recorded in Stuart 2005a: 178-179). It may be that the mythic narrative discussed here relates, in some way, to other creation events involving sacrificed fish, as at Mayapan. There, the aquatic entity is connected with Quetzalcoatl, who, not surprisingly in this context, shares traits with the Classic Maya Wind God (Taube 1997: 60). In a Palenque text, GI is also named as the one committing the sacrifice (Stuart 2005a: 179).

[233] The other, 'sister' vessel in the Chocholá style (fig. 97) seems to include the shell again, but now it is placed so that it just barely peeks out from behind an odd feature that takes up most of the area in the snaky maw. This element might even represent a house or temple shape surmounted by scrolls (see temple images in the Maya vase database; Kerr Database: K1377, K4629). While the diagonal line that intersects the temple shape mimics the line of the spear protruding from the fish, the house-like form simply seems to be animated by an earflare. Taken as whole, the scene indicates some kind of domination or conquest.

[234] The second example just mentioned likely includes watery associations as well, through the inclusion of a dark shell shape behind the temple-like structure.

act as a crocodilian representation of the earth.[235] A figure sits in the mouth of this elaborate earth symbol. Unfortunately, this individual bears few diagnostic features, but the cheek marking and the implication of a flower dangling from the brow may serve to associate this character with the Wind God. The other panel depicts a fiery maize mountain with a snake entering its earspool (see Stuart 1987; Taube 1992: 94, 2003: 437). As Taube (2004a) noted in his article on flowery concepts of the afterlife, mountains and wind (and snakes) are often irrevocably tied together in a complex that marks the space of the dead and the ancestors as a paradise filled with flowers and precious things. Even though the mountain here does not exhibit any overt flower icons, it incorporates Maize imagery protruding from behind the earflare. I suggest that, through this inclusion, the artist marked the location as the not only connected with the ancestors (through the watery realm symbolized in the other panel), but also with the origin of corn.[236]

Clear representations of the Waterlily Serpent are also frequently connected with kingship. Rulers have identified themselves with this creature and it appears in stucco on the sides of many temples (Ishihara, Taube and Awe 2006: 215, 218-219). Indeed, as Ishihara, Taube and Awe (2006: 220) state in considering façade programs, such imagery:

> …visually and physically articulated the ruler's domination over the ever-important resource of water as part of 'a generalized attempt to appropriate the historical aura and authority of [the supernatural], making specific relations of domination appear timeless and inevitable' (Epperson 1991: 31)…. The architecture may be related to a public expression of the rulers' deified power to its own ruling people and other polities (e.g. Benson 1985: 188; Brady and Ashmore 1999).

[235] I would like the thank Karl Taube (2010, pers. comm.) for pointing out this identification to me.

[236] Maya thought linked mountains with watery spaces, of course, in addition to associating them with caves that break the boundary between the human and the divine (see Taube 2004a).

Much as façade programs were used to legitimize royal power, then, so too did Chocholá visual programs support the rightful position of their individual owners in elite social contexts.

A single scribal group certainly created two of the Waterlily Snake pieces (figs. 59, 97). While there are slight differences between the two (the fish and waterlily headdress vs. a simple snout in connection with the head variant in the left panel in each, for instance), the overarching effect remains the same. The dramatic similarities connect them with the same artistic set, even as minute details suggest that two different people working closely together created these ceramics (consider, for example, the rendition of the supraorbital plate in each case and the manner of depicting the associated ruff). The third vessel just mentioned (fig. 101) looks very different from the two and indeed represents a slightly different class of creature. The artist rendered the body of the crocodile in an alternate style and scene focuses on the head and deity figure. This, along with the introduction of other iconographic forms (the crocodile and the mountain head in the opposing panel) seems to indicate another set of distinct scribal practices.

The speared fish-serpent is but one of several major serpentine entities repeatedly found in the Chocholá corpus. Another snake type associated with emergence appears more commonly (figs. 19, 99).[237] This being, like the speared entity just discussed, exhibits an elongated snout and crosshatching on its body. Circles also appear, both in

[237] These examples indicate the need for flexibility in the definition of the Chocholá style. Even though the frame that bounds the fish/snake figure connects with the rim band and travels all the way around the pot (in at least one case (fig. 99), these vessels participate in the Chocholá style. The depth of carving and the visual connection between them and yet another Chocholá piece, suggests inclusion. The glyphic forms in one piece further support this association. The text string in this case mimics the standard dedicatory formula associated with other specimens (see fig. 47 for a similar dedicatory statement) in the larger stylistic grouping. Indeed, the remarkably consistent use of this particular manner of framing the serpentine form implies that such framing devices were allowable in this context only (much in the way that the busts of Young Lords should appear in curvilinear cartouches while ballplayers were contained in rectilinear borders lacking scroll-like framing elements). In other related ceramic types, the artists did not make such a distinction and continued the line of the frame along the rim of the vessel indiscriminately.

the snout and on the body, and are apparently meant to complement the darkness implied by the crosshatching. The long, undulating trunk of a serpent characterizes these beings, but they also exhibit fin-like protuberances (associated with the back, belly and tail of the creature, figs. 19, 99). All of these fish/snake creatures have a hank of bound hair springing from the supraorbital plate and they are also portrayed with beards and a split tail (sometimes accompanied by another, simpler head form) in all cases. Such serpentine entities are common in Maya art and also appear at Copán, for instance, as the aquatic creatures that form Altars I, II and III (see Nicholson 1987).

Only three things separate these entities from the speared beings found in other Chocholá scenes featuring serpents discussed above. The bound hank of hair, the occasional appearance of a stylized serpentine head in association with the tail assemblage and the absence of an imbedded spear create a distinct visual trope.[238] These snakes also have a larger variety of objects and deities emerging from their gaping maws. Indeed, while obviously related to the speared creatures already discussed, it seems that these entities form part of a larger category of aquatic beings that facilitate the transition between the present creation and the watery realm of the Underworld (see Schele and Miller 1986; Taube 2003). At Copán, the snaky altars create a duality of fleshed/skeletal and sky/underworld associations, in a parallel demonstration of such interconnections and spatial complements.

Despite the visual correspondences shared by all of the Chocholá snake-fish creatures, no two share the same emergent element. In one case the old god (who, along with deity markings, actively breathes and displays the same bound hair found on the serpent) appears (fig. 99). In another (fig. 19), a young, tonsured Maize god emerges; this corn deity also emits breath scrolls and seems to wear a flower earspool. The third example (fig. 98) exhibits the most rudimentary carving in this sub-group, which further

[238] Both these fish-serpentine figures and the feathered forms to be discussed shortly wear the tuft of bound hair above the supraorbital plate. Its appearance in these two different settings indicates that it does not serve as a diagnostic trait. It does seem to have been used to separate similar fish/snake/feathery snake beings from the speared fish/snake in the Chocholá corpus, however, since the bound hair is missing in all examples where a spear appears.

complicates categorization; a waterlily seems be connected with one mouth (although its visual similarity to the **lu** syllables in other Chocholá dedicatory formula might suggest a gourd form instead) while the object in the other maw defies classification.

Artists' hands and scribal groups are difficult to identify as well. An artist most likely made one of the vessels discussed here (fig. 19) at a remove from those responsible for the others. It exhibits a completely different way of approaching the framing device. Additionally, the fish-serpent itself, while bearing iconographic similarities with the other ceramics in this sub-group, looks completely different from a stylistic point of view (simply consider the layering of shapes evident here). The other examples prove slightly more problematic. The same manner of differentiating between image and vessel wall occurs elsewhere (fig. 98), but the style of the serpentine creature is completely different in each case, although this may simply indicate the existence of two different scribes with varying levels of ability. The Oxkintok specimen (fig. 37) seems to more closely mimic the forms found in one of the aforementioned pieces (fig. 99), but such a suggestion remains tentative until the actual pots can be compared.

The final class of full-bodied Chocholá serpents represent yet a third category of being (figs. 4, 37, 100). While they share similarities with the other two classes of snake-like creatures (beards, a split tail and bodies with circular and/or crosshatching markings), several additional elements clearly distinguish them from the entities pictured in the other two groups. The fin-like volutes that flow from the bodies in the other examples have been replaced by a ruff of feathers rising from the backs of these serpentine beings, clearly connecting them with the speared entities discussed at the outset and marking them as feathered serpents (see Nicholson 1987). Given their function as vehicles of transmission, all the snake-like creatures pictured here are connected with primordial waters and darkness. Snakes are also frequently associated with celestial spaces as well and one of the Chocholá creatures curls around a star sign signifying the nighttime sky (Nicholson 1987: 185). A Pauahtun emerges from the maw of this being, while, in the

other panel, a young Sun God appears in the mouth (fig. 4).[239] In the Oxkintok example (fig. 37), what looks like a stylized breath scroll emerges from another serpent with a feathered back.[240] While the drawing is too stylized to allow for a concrete identification, this element seems to mimic the shells found in the speared snake-fish mouths just discussed. Indeed, the feathered snakes can be connected with the speared entities since they all carry the ruff of feathers along their backs (see Nicholson 1987 for a discussion of feathered snakes). The bound hank of hair serves as a distinguishing feature differentiating between like beings. Complementing such a view, the other non-speared feathered snake example (fig. 100) displays typical Chocholá imagery in the form of the water-marked shell surrounded by water scrolls found with both groups of entities. As Nicholson (1987: 186) suggested, while often bicephalic, feathered snakes with a single head also occur, as in the Chocholá examples. Nicholson explained that such representations probably acted as different manifestations of the same entity, although in the Chocholá representations, we may be witnessing a difference in narrative moment (speared/captured vs. uninjured/free).

The theme of emergence connected with all the snakes just discussed certainly complements other Chocholá imagery that focuses on portals and Underworld spaces (as in the young lord busts). In these particular representations, the potters chose to emphasize celestial and/or watery imagery as well. The explicit inclusion of feathers in many cases may relate to the central Mexican feathered serpent iconographic trope although the visual rendition is wholly Maya in conception, with no overt foreign stylistic references (Nicholson 1987: see especially 181). As such, a subtle reference to military prowess may also be encoded in such symbolism. The feathered serpent icon was certainly a popular trope in northern façade programs especially in the Late and Post Classic and may partially explain Chocholá potters' interest in this pictorial theme.

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[239] The identification of the Sun God here is tentative, given his youth and the fact that only the cruller appears (see Taube 1992: 54). The complementary imagery of a sky bearer and a star-marked snake in the second panel fits with this association.

[240] Karl Taube (2010, pers. comm.) identified the volutes as breath scrolls instead of other pliable objects, like feathers.

The last vessels considered (figs. 4, 37, 100) were probably made in the same area, given the stylistic and iconographic parallels between the two. They do not seem to have been made by the same artist due to the differences evident in both the language and pictorial mechanics of the hieroglyphic inclusions (although this remains a suggestion until the two with rim band sequences can be compared in full). In fact, the strong congruencies in the imagery associated with all of the serpent/fish/feathered snake forms implies, at the most, a handful of closely knit artist communities working in concert.

## *Scene 2e: GI and the 'Paddler Gods'*

GI is the only other major deity to be represented more than once in the Chocholá corpus, where he appears twice as a seated figure (figs. 2, 24). He has fish fin markings on his cheeks and at the sides of his mouth, along with a large eye containing a curl and surrounded by an abbreviated form of the cruller, as is typical of the deity (Taube 1992: 50-52). In at least one of the examples (fig. 24) he also bears the shell ear or ear flare that functions as a diagnostic attribute. In this grouping, I include vessels that depict two other deities identifiable as the 'Paddler Gods:' the Jaguar Paddler and the 'Stingray God,' so named because of the jaguar attributes evident in one and the stingray spine that has been thrust through the nose of the other. Even though they appear separately in the Chocholá corpus, I have combined these various deities into one scene group because of the symbolic associations shared by all three entities. In Chocholá examples, both paddler gods appear as bound captives and, while wearing beards, are easily differentiated from one another based on diagnostic features like the stingray spine through the nose in one instance (fig. 61) and the jaguar-marked chin in another (fig. 62).[241]

[241] Yet another example provides a possible instance of a Jaguar Paddler, unbound (fig. 102, right panel). Note the jaguar paws, jaguar headdress and spotted loin cloth. I would like to thank Penny Steinbach for calling my attention to these attributes.

Watery (and possibly blood) scrolls surround GI in both examples. In one case, however, he holds an object, while in the other he appears before what seem to be stacked bundles of cloth (or paper?).[242] In addition to standard connections with the ruling elite, GI generally has strong Sun God and primordial water associations (Stuart 2005a: 167-169). While a more specific reason for his inclusion in the Chocholá corpus cannot be given, these kinds of interrelationships clearly play into tropes popular within the style.

GI's watery, dark setting continues in scenes depicting the Paddler gods, which is why they have been included here. In Chocholá examples, the Jaguar Paddler clearly exists as a captive in a dark, aquatic world akin to the primordial watery spaces with which GI is connected (fig. 62). Also, like GI, the Jaguar Paddler is a roman-nosed deity with strong solar associations, thus providing another reason for including both in the same conceptual category. Indeed, many have linked this supernatural with the Jaguar God of the Underworld (see, for example, Freidel and Schele 1988; Robicsek and Hales 1988), although whether the one functions as a more specific aspect of the other or whether the two are in actuality distinct (though closely related) entities remains to be shown. The Chocholá captive may in fact depict the Jaguar God of the Underworld if indeed these two creatures should be separated from one another. He has a jaguar spotted chin but does not wear the jaguar headdress commonly found in association with the Jaguar Paddler but never in Underworld Jaguar contexts (David Stuart 2010, pers. comm.). In either case, the "swirling eye" shared by both Jaguar supernaturals and GI "likely…derives from bodies of water, widely identified with the underworld in Maya thought" (Houston, Stuart and Taube 2006: 170; see also Stuart 2005a: 175-176).

Symbolized by a crosshatched background, the dark space filled with liquid (e.g. marked with water scrolls bounding the image) in the case of the feline entity acts as a visual parallel to the scored surface in which GI appears (see fig. 2), surrounded by volutes marked with water symbolism. Furthermore, not only does the bound jaguarian deity sport typical god markings, he also exhibits the squiggly lines and circles usually

[242] This shape has also been read as a vessel, although the parallel striations and the oddly uneven shape seems to contradict such an interpretation (see fig. 24).

connected with the representation of bones or fish scales, which further extends the connection between this watery setting and an Underworld space.[243] The Jaguar God of the Underworld can appear bound in other settings, as at Tonina (i.e. Monument 155 where the sacrificial prisoner Yax Ahk takes this guise; see Martin and Grube 2000: 182), and is also conceptualized as a "powerful war deity" (Miller and Martin 2004: 165). If the creature pictured in the Chocholá corpus also carries these associations, then his inclusion complements the martial symbolism that functions as a subtext underlying much of the rest of Chocholá imagery.[244] Significantly, in addition to suggestions of strength in combat, a painted ceramic depicts a bound Jaguar God of the Underworld: "this warlike patron of fire meet[s] his end when he is bound and immolated by a heroic young god" (Miller and Martin 2004: 166, fig. 54b).

The fact that the jaguar deity and the aged 'Stingray God' (fig. 61) appear in similar settings probably relates to the age-old association between the two paddlers and the interrelated complexes of bloodletting and period ending rituals. As Stuart (1988: 182-193) pointed out, these two figures are often made manifest as the supernatural and/or ancestral figures called into being through the blood sacrifices of the elite. Not only do the two figures work as paired entities in association with bloodletting rituals, they also appear together in other mythological scenes centered around the Maize God, such as the famous canoeing episodes shown on the Tikal bones (see Stuart 1988: 189).

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[243] While the second drawing of a bound figure (fig. 61) is rendered somewhat impressionistically, the same bone/scale markings, along with the beard and watery volutes also occur in conjunction with the Stingray Paddler, which is why I tend to identify the feline supernatural as the Jaguar Paddler (if this paddler should remain separate from the Jaguar God of the Underworld). In addition to his jaguar spotted chin, the feline deity also exhibits whiskers or a beard in Chocholá examples. The connection between the beard and the jaguar markings would seem to support Taube's (1992: 50-52) suggestion that the beard, in Post Classic examples, might allude to the "bewhiskered jaguar." As Taube (1992: 52) also noted, however, citing Seler, Yucatec Maya thought of sun rays as being beard-like. In any case, the Chocholá style again seems to provide an iconographic bridge between the Post Classic and Late Classic periods, including, as it does, some iconographic features popular in later times while continuing to uphold Classic Maya traditions.

[244] I would like to thank Penny Steinbach (2009, pers. comm.) for pointing this out to me.

Interestingly, Linda Schele (1988: 315) suggested that the Stingray God also appears with GI attributes, furthering the connection between all three entities.

In the Chocholá corpus, the two gods function as a pair. Even though they do not appear on the same vessel, they are both bound, take the same pose and exhibit the same body markings. On one unusual pot, the Chocholá artist represented an aged deity that may be another Jaguar Paddler (fig. 102). He has jaguar claws for hands and sports a jaguar headdress, as is often the case in paddler representations. He also wears the same wrapping and bundle worn around the neck found in association with the Stingray Paddler in the Chocholá corpus (compare figs. 61, 102).[245] Here, a deity head clearly appears on the bundle and, in conjunction with this entity's solar associations, seems to allude to the Sun God, given the use of a cruller and apparent barbel. In this case, however, the jaguar supernatural is unbound while a monkey scribe appears in the other scene.[246] The scribal figure appears in a watery setting that complements the underworld associations connected with the feline deity in the other vessel scene.

The ceramicist also included two large blossoms marked with glyphic tags labeling the blooms as **K'UH-TE'**, translated as 'divine/holy tree,' probably relating to Bishop Diego de Landa's Post-Conquest accounts of *k'uh ch'e* (*kuche or kulche*), which Alfred M. Tozzer (1966 [1941]: 197, footnote 1064) identified as cedar. The Maya used cedar wood in many different ways but, significantly in this context, artists selected it (and it alone) for the creation of "idols" (Tozzer 1966 [1941]: 160, footnote 824).[247] In a visual corollary, the leaf that received such labeling in the Chocholá example seems to emerge from the open book on the monkey scribe's lap, which may indicate that the codex cover was made of cedar.[248] The monkey wears a stylus through his headband and

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[245] This entity may function as yet another form of the anthropomorphized feline deity since the headdress incorporates not only a jaguar head but also a prominent waterlily flower. In this way, the headdress by itself may allude to the Waterlily Jaguar instead.
[246] Interestingly, monkeys, as Underworld entities, can accompany the Jaguar God of the Underworld (see Coe 1973: cat. 219).
[247] I would like to thank David Stuart (2009, pers. comm.) for calling this to my attention.
[248] I would like to thank Dorie Reents-Budet (2010, pers. comm.) for pointing out this possibility to me.

makes a gesture of woe.[249] Simians are typically depicted as patrons of music and the scribal arts and have frequently been connected in the literature with the first set of twins who were turned into monkeys by the later, more famous headband twins as recounted in the Post-Conquest *Popol Vuh* (Benson 1994; Christenson 2003). The exact reasons behind such iconography remain obscure although it clearly relates to the Underworldly/watery symbolism so prevalent in the Chocholá corpus. A closely-knit single artistic group presumably created these ceramics, given the reduced number of vessels in this scene category and the repetition of imagery.[250]

## *Scene 2f: Miscellaneous Deities*

There are four other Chocholá vessels that display various supernatural figures that cannot be classed in the foregoing scene groups. This does not mean that the entities are unrelated to other deities in the corpus. Exactly the opposite is true in most cases. A great deal of overlap occurs between the characters represented in this general grouping and those depicted in other Chocholá scenes. I have chosen to keep these pieces separate from the preceding scenes, however, because while several of the same gods appear, in these examples, they do not function as the sole or principal focus of the image.

An aged God N appears on one pot, where he emerges from a shell marked by a *kan* cross (fig. 103). A being Michael Coe (1973: cat. 64) identified as the Mosquito God accompanies him. An atypical figure in Maya art, the mosquito supernatural exhibits god markings on his body and wears wings on his arms. He also sports a flower headdress and a death-eye neck ruff, placing him securely in the Underworld. The exact nature of the narrative is unclear, given its rarity in ancient Maya pictorial accounts, but the

[249] Taube (2003: 470) notes that this pose marks "the Classic Maya position of 'woe'" (see also Miller 1999: 157; Taube 2003: 470-471, 473; 2004: 79). Furthermore, Houston, in a personal communication with Taube (2003: 470-471), noted that it can be found in hieroglyphic forms as well.

[250] Individual hands cannot be identified at this time, however.

Mosquito God spears what appears to be an object presented for that purpose by God N.[251] Thus, vegetal, possibly even watery imagery (the blossoms marked as *k'uh te'* bear a striking resemblance to waterlily flowers found elsewhere in the Chocholá style) are not new to the corpus; both it and the figure of the Pauahtun complement themes already identified.

The third vessel depicts two youthful entities seated in front of swirling volutes (fig. 32). The entire space is marked as darkened, through the use of crosshatching in the lowest level of carving. The male entity on the left has a waterlily growing out of his hair as he paints the face of the woman who faces him and holds an ink pot. These figures recall those seen in the Young Lord scenes. The hieroglyphic text names a woman (possibly *Ixik Wi Balam*, as Boot [1997a: 64] has suggested) and can be logically connected with the female depicted in the scene cartouche. Other scholars have suggested that these entities should be interpreted as deities rather than humans, however; the female figure has been identified as the Moon Goddess (Tate: 2004: fig. 6), for example. While she lacks any of the attributes that would confirm this association, both figures sport circles on their arms, which may act as stand-ins for the more typical god markings seen throughout the Chocholá corpus. Additionally, the dot on the cheek of the painter might suggest that he is one of the headband twins.[252] In any case, the setting and

[251] Coe (1973: cat. 64) suggested that the mosquito supernatural speared God L instead. It is possible that the speared 'object' actually functions as a suffix for the hieroglyphic tag placed on the shell, which would mean that the Mosquito God does indeed spear God N. Coe also connects this with the Post Classic *Popol Vuh* story of the Hero Twins' descent into the Underworld; in this narrative, the twins ask a mosquito to sting the lords of the Underworld in turn so that each would reveal his name in the ensuing chaos. While this story would explain both the appearance of the mosquito and his actions, this particular episode from the Post Classic story of creation may or may not directly reflect Classic Maya beliefs. It also fails to account for the one other mosquito scene mentioned by Coe (1973: cat. 64), where the insect antagonizes a deer with human qualities.

[252] The hair treatment may complicate this view; the hair curls over the forehead and one long strand lies along the cranium before flaring out in front of the eyes. This coiffeur recalls representations of the tonsured Maize God. Even this association is problematic, however, given the small waterlily blossom that grows out of the top of the head.

the skin markings may indicate that the viewer sees two historical figures in the process of impersonating gods.[253]

Finally, an unusual composite entity occurs in another example (fig. 104). Here, the supernatural has an *akbal* marking on his forehead indicating his dark color. Dark spotted wings are just visible under the arms and an elongated abdomen stretches away from the legs to the right. These traits indicate a composite nature, including links to another type of character entirely, an insect that also carries a torch in painted examples (David Stuart 2007, pers. comm.; see Kerr Database: K521, K1003). Even the *akbal* forehead marking occurs on some of these insects, which have been tentatively classed as fireflies (David Stuart 2007, pers. comm.; according to Karl Taube [2010, pers. comm.], Stephen Houston has suggested the firefly identification as well). A supernatural head resembling other disembodied craniums in the Chocholá corpus emerges from the smoke of the torch. The strongest parallel occurs between this pictorial flourish and one of the disembodied heads discussed previously (fig. 3), which is not surprising given the fact that, as David Stuart (2007, pers. comm.) suggested, the same artist was responsible for the creation of both vessels. While the scribe also included a text, it does little to elucidate the image. The last glyph, however, may name the kind of creature we see here; it is read either **ma-jo-ka-ba** or **jo-ma-ka-ba** and in Yucatec, *homcab* refers to a wild species of bee (David Stuart 2007, pers. comm.).

These ceramics cannot be directly connected with any of the supernatural scenes I have defined, but the foregoing discussion has indicated that there is a great deal of thematic overlap. These commonalities connect the vessels in this miscellaneous category with other scene types as well as with each other. Disembodied heads and waterlilies are ubiquitous symbols both in this scene and in the larger Chocholá corpus. As is to be expected in such a 'miscellaneous' grouping, single artistic hands cannot be identified and the range of stylistic approaches implies multiple centers of production.

[253] The Moon Goddess may also appear on another vessel currently housed at the Palacio Cantón (vessel number 10-631714).

## *Scene 2g:*
## *Miscellaneous Animals and Animal Supernaturals*

Chocholá artists also chose to depict a wide range of animals. Like the miscellaneous deities category, these creatures, as a whole, complement the types of imagery already well represented in the Chocholá corpus. Monkey scribes, complete with paint pots, appear again in one example (fig. 105). The fascination with the Waterlily Jaguar also continues in three vessels (figs. 8, 23, 106), while a feline variation occurs on a fourth (fig. 107).[254] This cat is surrounded by water and is comparable to other representations of 'swimming jaguars' found on Codex Style pottery (see Kerr Database: K771; Dorie Reents-Budet 2010, pers. comm.).

Avian entities are visible on other pots and, like the felines just mentioned, are frequently connected with water (figs. 18, 22, 38). One is clearly the water bird or heron, surrounded by liquid-filled scrolls and clutching one of the volutes in its claw while also touching it with its beak (fig. 22). Two harpy eagles (identified by both Tate [1985: 131] and Ardren [1996: 243]) or possibly woodpeckers (Karl Taube 2010, pers. comm.) also appear, seated facing one another while holding offerings (fig. 18), much as the young lords do in some of the conference scenes. These are anthropomorphized birds (or humans impersonating supernaturals); one clearly seems to be marked as female though the inclusion of prominent breasts. Unidentified birds also occur in association with a world tree image from Oxkintok (fig. 38) (it is perhaps significant that this vessel comes from Oxkintok while the one just discussed names an Oxkintok lord in the accompanying inscription). The cross (forming the core of the tree) sprouts from between two disembodied crania that may symbolize a mountainous or earthly location. The shape of

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[254] Coe (1973: 127) suggested that one of these vessels (fig. 106) was made in the Chocholá area but saw it as part of a related type instead of actually being Chocholá. Apparently the "curiously awkward" glyph and the extensive use of incised lines in the rendition of the scrolls surrounding the jaguar led Coe to this conclusion. Volutes create a cartouche-like frame and deep carving is evidenced in the way the main body of the feline is separated from the background, both of which, when found in conjunction, I argue, act as diagnostic characteristics of the Chocholá style.

Another entity with jaguar associations may also form part of this complex (see my earlier comments on the Jaguar Paddler and fig. 102).

the forehead, however, and the volutes that rise from the top of the head seem to be yet another re-interpretation of the disembodied heads mentioned earlier and associated with K'awiil.[255] Thus, while containing odd combinations of characters or iconographic referents otherwise separate from typical Chocholá scene categories, all the ceramics in this group display a number of features that frequently link to the core symbol set (like waterlilies, the Waterlily Jaguar, etc.) connected with the style.[256]

## *Scene 2: Overview*

Many of the Chocholá deity/supernatural scenes exhibit thematic overlapping. God L connects with God K, who then receives his own, separate treatment. The K'awiil head can then be linked, visually, to the other stand-alone heads, which share traits with this deity while clearly being separate forms in their own right. Waterlilies abound in all of the above scenes as does the theme of emergence, which is continued in the snake-like creatures that undulate their way across Chocholá pots. The prevalence of waterlily imagery corresponds with the widespread use of watery symbolism by Chocholá artists. Thus, there can be no single 'Waterlily Complex' scene, as suggested by Tate (1985), since the corpus is infused with aquatic and vegetative iconography that powerfully suggests a dark, watery Underworld setting.

[255] In what seems to be a large stingray spine located at the crossing, we may also see a much-abbreviated reference to the Quadripartite Badge commonly connected with world trees.

[256] One crude version of a serpent head also appears (fig. 13). I tentatively class this piece as Chocholá because the scene is completely contained within a frame and is separated from the rim band appearing at the lip of the vessel. The serpent head is also a standard Chocholá inclusion and this example even seems to include waterlily elements so common in the corpus. The thick use of line and the crude pseudoglyphic sequence, however, seem to indicate a secondary area of production.

*Conclusion*

I have grouped vessels in the Chocholá style based on theme and scene type. While each of the groups I have suggested stands on its own, with its own set of constituent attributes and patterns for rendering imagery, certain recurrent features point to a larger conceptual understanding of the style and its iconographic tropes. Almost all of the Chocholá pots refer, in one way or another, to a structural precept focused on otherworldly locations, usually indicated by the inclusion of twisting, swirling, permeable cartouche frames. The frames act as portals and it is the proper ritual behavior of the young lords that results in both the appearance of the transitional space and the elite ability to use it in communicating with other realms and the supernaturals inhabiting them.

Either overt or metaphorical references to the themes of capture, sacrifice and bloodletting are almost as common as the watery tropes that inundate most examples. Deer hunt, ballgame, prisoner and autosacrifice imagery, for instance, form a cohesive, structural whole that also includes representations of God L (and his rope necklace), GI (bound), the feathered serpent (speared) and other deities pictured in the corpus. Furthermore, in almost all cases, the supernatural entities mark the liminality of the space and are directly connected with a supreme elite status, either through an association with ancestors or the political institution of kingship as linked with economic exchange and/or lordly regalia.

We can then consider such objects as one part of a complex set of social interactions that include gift-giving and feasting as well as funerary rituals. As vessels that would have been actively used in elite settings (in addition to being deposited in sumptuously outfitted graves), these ceramics cannot be viewed in isolation but rather must be seen in their communicative role: high status was conferred upon the owner and his (or her) position in the social hierarchy was legitimized by the images found on Chocholá pots. The way potters rendered imagery highlights the interactive and reciprocal quality of Chocholá iconography. Many of the scenes curve down over the bottom edge of the vessel and the viewer would only have seen important details when

the cup was in use (i.e., lifted to the lips of a companion).[257] The dynamic use of these vessels is further emphasized by one example now found in Palacio Cantón storage (vessel number 10-383109). In this case, an abbreviated hieroglyphic sequence of three glyphs has been incised opposite the image. While the scribe had plenty of room in which to render all three elements on the upper wall, he instead chose to enlarge the signs and give them a wide spacing so that the last can barely be seen when the pot is at rest and can only be fully read when the vessel is lifted and tilted. Such evidence indicates that (in the mind of the artists at least, and certainly too in the patrons') Chocholá imagery and text was meant to be actively experienced (i.e. 'consumed') not only by the person using the pot but also by those surrounding him/her.[258] As such, the messages conveyed by these inclusions speak not only to the powerful position of the individuals who possessed such objects. Indeed, the visual drama of Chocholá ceramics indicates the desire to express a specific subset of legitimizing information grounded in particular aspects of elite status, proper behavior and the role of Maya lords as links between the human and supernatural realms.

[257] While many of these vessels are not overly large by Maya standards, their shape nonetheless encourages a two-handed grip in most cases, which often would have left the central part of the vessel (showing either the image or the opposing diagonal or vertical texts) visible.

[258] The performative nature of the object during use is, of course, not unique to the Maya and can be found in other cultures, places and times like ancient Greece, for instance. Bryson (2001: 25) notes, "such effects activate the sense of the work as existing for-you and from–you, in the here and now of actual viewing."

## Chapter 5
## Chocholá Hieroglyphic Sequences

### *Introduction*

In addition to the iconographic content, words were frequently carved into Chocholá vessel walls. Artists working in the style used low relief or incised lines to create the hieroglyphic portions in contrast to the high relief technique seen in the image panels. While the scenes were always placed on the side of the pot and separated from both lip and base, scribes demonstrated more freedom in the placement of texts, which can be found in several different areas. Bands of hieroglyphs circle the rim of the vessel in many cases (figs. 3, 4). Diagonal texts were also frequently placed opposite the image and typically take a directional orientation moving from right to left as the viewer reads from top to bottom (fig. 2). Vertical sequences are slightly less common and could either appear opposite a single image or could act as the boundary between two distinct scene panels (figs. 15, 21, 29). The potters occasionally chose to combine the different placement patterns. Rim bands and diagonal or vertical texts rarely appear together and never do all three occur simultaneously (fig. 40). In almost all cases, however, the words carved into Chocholá ceramics form a consistent string of phrases that have come to be known as the dedicatory formula (or the Primary Standard Sequence, PSS for short).[259]

Many Maya ceramics display what has been called the Primary Standard Sequence or PSS. The PSS is made up of a band of glyphs that are either carved or

[259] Scene captions do occur, and are separate from the dedicatory formula in both form and function. While the images do not simply illustrate the text, such labels frequently refer to some aspect of the action or the actors depicted in the iconographic panels although they can sometimes provide extremely short versions of the dedicatory formula. These glyphs are visually distinct from the image because they are raised from the background and are typically incised on elevated blocks. Not only does this create a distinctive appearance, it also seems to be an interesting combination of two different, though obviously related, decorative traditions (carving deeply into the vessel wall vs. incising lines into a raised ground). When they relate directly to the Chocholá body of images, I have chosen to include my discussion of these texts in the preceding chapter on iconography.

painted near the vessel lip. Michael Coe (1973) first identified this rim text as a repetitive, formulaic script in *The Maya Scribe and His World* where he also coined the Chocholá style as a term. At this early date, an exact reading for the hieroglyphic inclusions remained elusive, however, which resulted in the vague title of Primary Standard Sequence. In the years following Coe's original identification of the formulaic text, scholars have made significant advancements in deciphering the glyphic forms of the PSS (e.g. Grube 1990; Houston and Taube 1987; Macleod 1990; Stuart 1989). Such new developments have, in turn, shed light on the way the text functioned in relation to the ceramics on which it appears. Our increasing understanding of this sequence, as a whole, allows, and even encourages, a new term for the now outmoded PSS title. David Stuart (2005b: 114) has suggested the phrase 'dedicatory formula.' I will use this expression in place of the PSS designation for two reasons. First, it more specifically indicates that the text often functions, in large part, to mark the patron of the vessel.[260]

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[260] Individuals are often named in the dedicatory formula. These people are usually thought to be the patrons/owners of the ceramics on which they are named. Semantically this makes sense because the dedicatory text often conforms to the following pattern: 'his drinking cup for [liquid type, e.g. cacao], [name/title]. For the Maya, the object is/was marked by a possessive pronoun, but, unlike in English, the name of the owner follows the object phrase. Instead of saying 'Mary's house,' the Maya would instead say 'her house, Mary.' Thus, given the nature of Maya language, the names (or titles) that end the dedicatory formula should refer to patrons/owners.

The distinction between patron and owner is an important one but it is hard to reconstruct in many cases (MacLeod and Reents-Budet 1994: 130). This is especially true of the Chocholá style since information regarding archaeological context is either completely lacking or cursory in nature. Carlos Pallán Gayol (2006: 82) suggested that at least one Chocholá scribe (fig. 43) clearly differentiated between the patron and the owner, however. Pallán Gayol (2006: 82) argued that the hieroglyphic text was composed of a semantic coupling that he translated as *y-uxul* (the problematic **lu**-bat phrase) *u jaay sajal y-uk'ib ti K'anil Mo'o K'uk'u'm*. In Pallán Gayol's interpretation, the first three terms referred to the carving of the vessel of the *sajal*. According to Pallán Gayol, the second phrase, composed of five words, then names the owner (*K'anil Mo'o K'uk'u'm*), to whom the *sajal* had gifted the pot.

Artists might have been occasionally mentioned at the end of the dedication text on other Maya vessels, but this is often connected with titles that refer to artistic creation. In cases where the artist receives specific mention, the phrase referring to 'his writing,' or 'his carving' (the **lu**-bat collocation) in Chocholá examples, is immediately followed by

Second, it provides a more effective explanation for the self-referential nature of the text—'his drinking cup,' etc.

Not surprisingly, Chocholá vessels often incorporate a unique form of the dedicatory formula that varies in length. Rim texts provide the most common manifestation of the Chocholá variation. The text may stretch all the way around the rim (e.g. figs. 4 and 27, where the inscription, significantly, begins over one of the iconographic panels). In another variation found commonly in association with youthful ballplayers, the glyph string can be interrupted by and clearly separated from the pictorial scene (fig. 85). In several of these pieces, the text reads correctly, from left to right, while the ballplayer faces to his left. Ultimately, this means that the athlete always looks towards, and thus emphasizes, the titular glyphs (and possibly his connection with them) that terminate the dedicatory formula. The position of his left hand provides a visual complement: the diagonal created by the elbow, lower arm and fingers leads the eye to the beginning of the dedication sequence appearing behind the player.[261]

While fairly unusual in the greater Maya ceramic record, diagonal and vertical texts could replace the rim band as truncated versions of the dedicatory sequence in Chocholá examples. All diagonal strings introduce a reading order that begins near the lip of the ceramic and ends near the base, as is the case of the vertical texts (e.g. figs. 2, 15). When diagonal texts are employed, the viewer often reads from the lip of the vessel

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the artist's name (MacLeod and Reents-Budet 1994: 132). When the structure inserts information, like *y-uk'ib*, regarding function, between the 'writing/carving' reference and nominal titles, the text instead seems to name the patron/owner. As Barbara MacLeod and Dorie Reents-Budet (1994: 133) note, the patron/owner can also receive titles related to artistic activities. These titles follow the name of the individual in all cases, though, and such nominal phrases are clearly separated structurally from the initial reference to art-making.

[261] In other cases where the reading order has been reversed (e.g. fig. 35), the ballplayer looks towards the beginning of the glyphic sequence, thus encouraging the viewer to initiate reading. Caption texts frequently interrupt the scene also so, so that the athlete not only looks toward the beginning of the dedicatory rim band but also stares directly at his own name inserted in the scene in front of him. In cases where the rim band exists as a continuous line above the image of the ballplayer, the initial glyph has been placed directly over the gamer's head (fig. 33).

in a downward diagonal that comes to rest at the base of the vessel to the left of the initial starting point. In many cases, the text approaches and can even lightly touch the base of the iconographic panel on the opposite side of the pot. The reasons behind such choices remain unclear, but several suggestions remain possible at this early stage. First, even in its reduced form (diagonal texts typically do not contain the amount of information associated with rim bands), the glyphic portions of the ceramic decoration take up approximately the same amount of room from side to side as that devoted to the image, which balances the entirety of the composition. The same may be said of many of the vertical texts (e.g. fig. 15), which commonly appear as double columns. Second, at least a few of the diagonal examples seem to constantly draw the reader back to the vessel's pictorial content while also suggesting an interrelationship between the two through the proximity of the titular portions of the glyphic string and the pictorial scenes (see especially fig. 18). Third, if the cup meets the lips above the scene panel, when the person tips it as he or she drinks, the glyphs become oriented in a more directly vertical band. In this scenario, the string becomes easily legible through use, which implies a nuanced approach not only to vessel creation, but also to the ritual circumstances of feasting.[262] While such observations require further examination and development, the unusual orientation choices that actively dictate viewing practices are specifically Chocholá in nature and, when viewed within the continuum of Chocholá vessels, become diagnostic as well.

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[262] One of the few examples (fig. 17) that does not retain this orientation incorporates a glyphic text that slants down to the right from the lip of the vessel. The hieroglyphic sequence is also reversed, so that the viewer must approach the dedicatory formula from a perspective to the right of the text instead of the left as in other examples. Furthermore, the reversal of the glyphic blocks means that the individual words, while progressing in the normal fashion from top to bottom, must be read backward. For this text to take a more vertical orientation, as with the other examples, the drinker's lips must meet the cup closer and to the right of the glyphic forms, which partially obscures their visibility. The oddities found in this case seem to indicate an experimental approach, which may also be connected with chronological specificity. In this context, it is perhaps significant to note that the ballgame vessel in question is one that names the Oxkintok lord **OHL-si-?-TOK'**.

The atypical orientation of the text is not the only idiosyncrasy encoded in the Chocholá dedication. Other examples include certain variations that can be linked with regional scribal schools, as I will discuss in the next chapter. What is more, within this broader set of temporal and geographic associations, many vessels exhibit certain glyphic alternatives that can only be found in the Chocholá style. Indeed, I argue that the unusual manifestation of dedicatory texts marks a highly intellectual, individualized scribal approach to writing that is medium specific and involved the pictorial revision and reinterpretation of certain commonly used signs as well as an unusual form of shorthand.

Despite such idiosyncrasies, the Chocholá dedicatory formula exhibits a great deal of standardization on a number of different levels. From a stylistic standpoint, many of the hieroglyphic sequences exhibit strong similarities that speak to a cohesive potting community. Epigraphically, the consistencies become even more striking and have allowed scholars to develop greater insights regarding the exact meaning of typical dedicatory formulae from across the Maya world (please see my comments on the state of the literature in Chapter 2). The hieroglyphic rim bands in the canonical Chocholá style are so formulaic, both stylistically and epigraphically in many cases, that the text itself, as well as its orientation, becomes one of the diagnostic characteristics defining the style. The exact type of drink and the naming of different individuals are among the only major variations, as I will indicate shortly. Despite such marked homogeneity within the core group, the Chocholá style also consists of a number of stylistic outliers. These ceramics clearly participate in the larger category of vessels as defined in Chapter 3, but the artists who created them chose to present hieroglyphic sequences that differ in appearance from the core group. The manifestation of both heavily standardized and distinctive forms seems to indicate multiple centers of production.

I first present a reading of the Chocholá dedicatory formula, followed by a consideration of some important names and titles. I do not provide translations for each ceramic text; this would be repetitive in the extreme and would serve little purpose. I instead discuss standard inclusions while also calling attention to unusual variations. The core similarities evident in the style then allow me to identify artists' hands. In later

chapters, I place identifications regarding the structure of the text and artists' hands within a larger context. In considering context in the following chapter, for example, I study the dedicatory formulae in order to investigate a larger, methodological question: can ceramics lacking provenience be connected with specific locations either of production or consumption based on textual information?

### *The Dedicatory Formula On Chocholá Style Ceramics*

The dedicatory formula commonly begins with what has been called the Initial Sign (fig. 47, C1).[263] The introductory hieroglyph frequently contains an **a** prefix and **ya** suffix, which led Barbara Macleod and Yuriy Polyukhovich (2005) to propose a reading of *alay* (loosely translated as 'here').[264] While the *alay* reading remains uncertain, the

[263] I use the standard manner of referring to glyphic location in which glyph blocks are divided into a grid composed of columns and rows. Columns are labeled A, B, C, etc., starting at the left with the first full glyph and proceeding to the right. Rows are numbered 1, 2, 3, etc., in descending order. Thus, the location of the first glyph is A1. (see figs. 47, 85, 105 for representative examples of this system as applied to rim bands, figs. 16, 17 for diagonal sequences and figs. 15, 48 for vertical inscriptions and fig. 66 for combinations of vertical and scene caption texts. My discussion of all glyphic designations follows this pattern, even when rows and columns are not explicitly marked on the illustrations. The placement of columns and rows remains the same in all cases, beginning with A1. In the case of rollout photographs, the proper reading order of the dedicatory formula often does not follow an A1, B1, C1 progression as the Initial Sign may appear mid-way through the wrap-around sequence as it is recorded in the photograph.

[264] Hieroglyphic sequences are transcribed and transliterated following standard formatting procedures. Syllables are marked as such by bold lettering while logographs are written using bolded capital letters (e.g. **ba-ka-KAB**). At the transcription stage, syllables and/or logographs from the same glyphic block are separated from one another by dashes while spaces indicate a break between glyphic blocks (e.g. **u-ja-yi yu-k'i-bi**). When the series of suffixes and logograms have been written as words, they appear in italics (with possessive pronouns hyphenated: *y-uk'ib*). In many cases, the final vowel was not meant to be voiced and simply indicated vowel harmony or disharmony (which affects spelling and pronunciation). In cases where the vowel is not pronounced, it is omitted in the transcription: hence **ka-ka-wa** becomes *kakaw*. English translations will

glyphic form clearly functions as an introduction to the longer text string (Grube 1990: 323; Stuart 1989: 152-153). All Initial Signs in Chocholá examples follow the normal pattern in the inclusion of an **a** syllable. Similarities to standard renditions end there, though. Not all Chocholá sequences include the Initial Sign (a little more than a quarter of the hieroglyphic corpus incorporate the initial marker). Furthermore, those that do present the introductory glyph exhibit further suffixing—frequently taking the form of an **AJAW** prefix attached to the top of the main sign—while also omitting one of the standard inclusions—the **ya** suffix.[265] Additionally, the main sign in Chocholá examples appears to be remarkably similar to other, more traditional main signs (see, for example, Macleod and Polyukhovich 2005), which implies that the reading remains the same. As the odd introductory glyph demonstrates, though, the Chocholá dedicatory formula begins in a highly unusual manner in relation to traditional, southern sequences. In all likelihood, a group of scribes visually reanalyzed the Initial Sign based on now lost conventions. The revision of the introductory glyph incorporated several logographs, including **AJAW**, which probably all functioned together as a larger logogram for the verb root. In any case, the **AJAW** prefix was not meant to be read individually in this case, but rather marked the idiosyncratic nature of the style.

In the current corpus, standard dedication texts can then include a sign or series of signs that are very difficult to read.[266] The first is made up of what seem to be **CHAAN (or KAAN**, sky) and **K'IN** (day) logograms with **ja** suffixing (fig. 108, B1). In one case, an **EK'** (star) logogram replaces the **K'IN** sign (fig. 47, D1). These symbols (the sky/day/star signs) probably acted as a single image. Such an inseparable combination occurs frequently in northern dedicatory texts and might be related to the concept of ascension or upwards movement (David Stuart 2006, pers. comm.). In two examples, the

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occur in a normal typeface but will be set off from the rest of the text by single quotation marks (e.g. 'his cup, his drinking vessel').

[265] There is one possible exception to this general pattern. Tate (1985: fig. 11) illustrates a vessel containing what seems to be an Initial Sign with the **ya** suffix (fig. 66, B2).

[266] Most inclusions fall into the pattern discussed here. There is one example, however, that includes a dotted ajaw head after the **K'IN/CHAAN** glyphic combination; currently no reading exists for this glyph (Grube 1990: 324).

entire glyph block can be replaced by (but not necessarily substituted for) one containing a **pi** prefix.[267] Unfortunately, the new glyph block is no more easily translated than the **CHAAN/K'IN** combination and so does not shed any light on exact meaning. In all instances, however, a **ja** remains constant (fig. 105, H1). Regardless of suffixing, the alternate forms of the main sign appear variously as a Kawak symbol or as what seems to be a bead (David Stuart 2005, pers. comm.). In ceramics containing the more elaborate introductory sequence (i.e. those with an Initial Sign followed by **CHAAN**, etc. glyphs), the scribe often chose to carve a collocation that includes another currently unreadable sign, preceded by what seems to be a **che** syllable. The enigmatic God N sign typical in ceramic dedications from the south occasionally appears as well, although in such dramatically reduced numbers as to be statistically insignificant.[268]

In a few Chocholá dedicatory formulae, the *yich* hieroglyph can be found next (fig. 47, E1). This reading is particularly clear in Chocholá examples because it is usually rendered phonetically as **yi-chi-ya**. Barbara Macleod (1989) first deciphered *yich* as a possessed form of the root *hich* meaning 'writing surface.' While this translation remains uncertain, no acceptable alternatives have been suggested (David Stuart 2009, pers. comm.). The Initial Sign, the hieroglyphs showing either a **K'IN** or a **pi**, and the *yich* compound, along with the God N head variant and/or the *che(?)* collocation form one structural section of the dedicatory formula. This expression, as a whole, indicates where the dedicatory formula starts and can be loosely translated as 'Here, [?] [?], his writing surface.' The unusual **AJAW** components in the Initial Sign and the standard omission of the God N verb serve to clearly separate Chocholá texts from other ceramic dedicatory sequences. Thus, Chocholá scribes sought alternatives at the outset, a fact made particularly evident when the reader is first faced with the **AJAW** sign, followed by other distinctive logograms and the exclusion of the familiar God N glyph.

The scribal freedom indicated by the pattern just identified continues in one problematic example (fig. 16). In this case, the introductory section of the dedicatory

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[267] David Stuart (1987: 11-13) was the first to identify the **pi** syllable.
[268] Only three or four ceramics that can clearly be classed as Chocholá include the God N variant (see fig. 15).

formula is quite unusual. It clearly includes an introductory glyph, complete with **a** syllabic prefixing (A1). A complicated glyph block follows and seems to require both a syllabic and logographic reading (B1). As one might expect, what looks like the **CHAAN** sign occurs at the lower left of the glyph block while a 'mirror' superfix has replaced the star/day logograms. As structural patterns of substitution indicate, the glyph as a whole retains the linguistic meaning found in the more typical Chocholá logogram of sky/star/day. A full-figured **u** (?) comes next and is associated with a **ba** in the glyphic block that follows (A2, B2). This inclusion disrupts the standard flow of the dedicatory sequence in an unexpected way and seems to indicate a reading of 'in his image' (*u baah*) or 'it is his/her person in (the state of)….'[269] There also seems to be a **li** phonetic reading in the next hieroglyph (A3), which might make *u baah* into *u baahil*. After this opening sequence, the text becomes more traditional in form and includes typical statements in the next section regarding the method of manufacture (B3) and the *u jaay* self-referential statement (A4) to be discussed shortly.

Information regarding the decoration of the 'writing surface' can be found immediately following the *yich* expression. This glyphic form marks the transition between the first and second textual sections, as is the case in typical dedicatory formulae. In many instances, the so-called **lu**-bat follows next (fig. 47, F1, G1).[270] Scribes using paint as their medium of choice would insert *u tzib* in place of the **lu**-bat combination as a way of referring to the painting of the vessel. This led David Stuart

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[269] See Stuart 2005a: 73.

[270] There are around fourteen examples of the 'introductory' text that omit the **lu**-bat glyphic combination. Several examples (e.g. fig. 35) simply include extremely truncated forms of this introductory sequence. Occasionally (e.g. fig. 98), though, the potter seems have combined pseudo-glyphs and readable(?) words. An introductory hieroglyph can be identified in some cases but the rest of the text seems repetitive and not distinctive enough to be deciphered. Animal heads also appear but they look more like repeated renditions of vulture heads in this case (often used as **li** syllables in Chocholá and other texts). While some ceramics display readable hieroglyphs, they are repeated throughout the rim band so that the reading simply becomes a meaningless repetition of syllables (i.e. *lu-lu-lu-lu*). In the vessel just mentioned (fig. 98), there is one additional inclusion that may refer to the **lu**-bat but more likely, the Initial Sign is the only 'readable' glyph in this case.

(1987: 7, n. 2; 1989: 154) to suggest that the **lu**-bat substitutes structurally for the *u-tzib* reading when appearing on carved vessels and, furthermore, that this glyphic combination must refer to the carving (vs. painting) of the pot. The bat head in the Chocholá examples always contains a **yu** prefix. Additionally, most scribes devoted the entire glyph block following the bat head to the carving of a clear phonetic **lu** complement (fig. 47, G1; hence the **lu**-bat moniker).[271] A reading of *uxul* has been suggested, but the exact phonetic/logographic meaning of the bat head remains elusive (see MacLeod and Reents-Budet 1994: 125). In a continual effort to separate Chocholá texts from other sequences, the artists often chose to revise the typical **lu-**bat collocation by separating out the **lu** syllable and giving it its own glyph block. They also added some anthropomorphic details that are both distinctive and unprecedented.[272]

As mentioned previously, the **lu**-bat glyphic combination creates a semantic closure for the first section of the dedicatory formula: 'Here, [?], his writing surface, his carving.' It also links this section with the next, which gives more specific information regarding intended use. In Chocholá examples, pieces could fulfill several different concrete purposes. The vast majority includes the following two glyphs, regardless of whether or not the texts also display the opening sequence including the Initial Sign and the reference to the type or style of decoration.[273] These two glyphs are rendered, syllabically, as **u-ja-yi yu-k'i-bi** (*u jaay y-uk'ib*), 'his cup, his drinking vessel' (fig. 47, H1, I1).[274] In an interesting development, scribes rendered the **k'i** syllable as a full-form

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[271] While the **lu** syllable takes up the entire glyph block in such cases, it may also be pictured with a phonetic **u** complement attached as a suffix.

[272] Erik Boot (2008, pers. comm.) and David Stuart (2008, pers. comm.) concur; Stuart does note that head variations of the **lu** syllable do appear in other contexts but further states that they are few and far between.

[273] Just over 70% of identifiable Chocholá texts incorporate either one or both of the two glyph blocks forming the *u jaay y-uk'ib* phrase.

[274] Grube has suggested that *jaay* refers to the thinness of the vessel walls (Grube 1990: 322, see also Macleod 1990: 363-64). Barbara Macleod (2005, pers. comm., see also 1990: 363), however, noted that *jaay* actually appears, in Maya dictionaries, in association with vessel types (cups or basins). In fact, Alfonso Lacadana first proposed that *jaay* should be read as cup and David Stuart has suggested that it relates to a word for

bird instead of selecting the wing syllabic form, as is more typical (see Table 1; Grube 1990: fig. 1). Indeed, the carvers extended the pattern of visual reanalysis seen in the Initial Sign and the **lu** syllable to the **k'i** syllable by rendering it in full-figured from as well. Thus, Chocholá craftsmen used the opening sequences of the dedicatory formula to differentiate their products from those made by other ceramicists throughout the Maya world.

About 50% of the time, the scribe then chose to provide information regarding the specific use of the drinking vessel, as is typical of dedicatory formulae generally. Within this group, there are several different possibilities and two common variations. The first can be read **ti-tzi-ji**, occasionally followed by a **li** head variant, for *ti tzih* or *ti tzihil* (fig. 45, A3, A4). *Ti* acts as the preposition 'for,' in this case, so that the entire phrase reads 'his cup, for….' Grube (1990: 325) argued that *tzih/tzihil* referred to the freshness of the beverage contained by the drinking cup. Grube (1990: 325) further cited Houston, Stuart and Taube (1989) in noting, "The Chocholá ceramics correspond to other ceramics in that vessels with rounded or globular interiors were designed for Atole, and tall-sided vessels held other drinks, like Cacao."[275] Indeed, not only can vessel forms be found in association with the glyphic texts just mentioned, the glyphic inclusions also often actually name the type of drink.[276] Chocholá artists typically mentioned two basic types of liquid, *ul* ('atole,' fig. 109, H1) or *kakaw* ('cacao,' fig. 45, A5). References to other liquids, like a yellow drink (see fig. 43, K1), also occur but less frequently. The full *ti tzih(il)* reading appears most commonly with cacao glyphs (fig. 45, A3, A4) while a *ch'aj* (**ch'a-ja**, i.e. pinole) reference is frequently associated with atole (fig. 108, H1). The *ti tzih* glyphic combination, however, can also appear by itself, thus marking the contents as fresh without classifying them more specifically (fig. 85, C1).

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gourd, which would then have both 'thin' and 'cup' as auxiliary associations (David Stuart 2005, pers. comm.).

[275] There does not seem to be as strong a correlation between vessel shape and contents in the Chocholá corpus as in other ceramic types. Most of these ceramics take a cup form with a flaring rim.

[276] Again, this is a standard inclusion in dedicatory formulae and is *not* an unusual manifestation specific to Chocholá examples (see Houston, Stuart and Taube 1989).

In the revisualization of glyphic forms that characterizes Chocholá sequences, scribes also occasionally chose to incorporate an odd variant of the *tzih/tzihil* phrase, phonetically readable as **ta-tzi-ti** (*ta tzit?*) (figs. 22, B1; 27, B1; 33, I1; 35, B1). The meaning is unclear at this stage, although structurally it should relate to the *ti tzihil* expressions mentioned above. Indeed, it may act as an abbreviated form of the *ti tzihil* expression that visually couples, through the use of **ta** and **ti** syllables, with other statements in the dedicatory formula. In one of these examples (fig. 35, C1), the **ta** syllable is also used in place of the more typical **yu** in the preceding hieroglyph—**ta-k'i-bi** instead of **yu-k'i-bi**—which would imply that replacing **ti** or **yu** with **ta** was one of the variations allowed in the Chocholá approach. This pattern of glyphic rendition is unprecedented in Maya dedicatory formulae (David Stuart 2009, pers. comm.) and initially could be read as individual scribal error. The fact that it occurs in connection with the **ta-tzi-ti** phrase, which appears multiple times, may instead indicate a pictorial play on syllabic use (**<u>ta</u>-k'i-bi**, **<u>ta</u>-tzi-ti**) and/or an idiosyncratic method of abbreviating the phrase. Different, evidently literate artists used the **ta-tzi-ti** collocation. The repeated use of the **ta** syllable in this location suggests that regional production models rather than scribal error explains its use.

When considering Chocholá text strings as a unit, the contraction of glyphic forms is but one way in which scribes reanalyzed the dedicatory formula in diagnostic fashion. The resulting pattern of unusual sign selection—*u jaay ta k'ib ta tzit* or *y-uk'ib ta tzit* instead of *u jaay y-uk'ib ti tzihil*—seems to act as an intellectual shorthand approach to the dedicatory sequence. Ultimately, such highly unusual idiosyncrasies suggest an extremely literate readership composed of elites who appreciated such esoteric reorganization and abbreviation. Given the stylistic consistency seen in glyphic rendition, these inclusions certainly also functioned as tags that immediately connected them with a particular scribal group working in the Oxkintok area (much as using theater vs. theatre automatically indicates the American vs. British cultural affiliation of the modern author).

Chocholá scribes also chose to use the more traditional ways of tagging the vessel's contents. The fresh quality of the beverage was not always seen as an important aspect that needed recording. Chocholá scribes occasionally used simple statements, such as **ti-u**[?]**-lu** or *ti ul*, 'for atole' (fig. 109, H1; Grube 1990: 326). In many cases, though, the exact nature of the drink evidently required further qualification. Freshness was but the most popular way of describing any given liquid held by Chocholá pots. Other types of drinks were also named, though less frequently. One collocation (fig. 108, H1, I1), for example, can be read **ti-ch'a-ja u-lu**. Grube (1990: 325) suggests that this translates as 'for bitter atole,' while Stuart (2005, pers. comm.) has noted that ch'aj doesn't simply mean bitter but rather indicates a more specific type of atole or corn drink.[277] Another (fig. 63, A4, A5) could read **tzi-ji-li SAK-ja** identifying the drink as fresh. Grube (1990: 325) suggested an atole identification for this liquid. The syllable Grube read as **li** could, however, be a **ka** fish fin for **ka-ka-(wa)** or, alternately, **ka-(ka)-w(a)** for *kakaw*, depending on whether the suffix is read as two fish fins or a fish fin and part of a **wa** syllable.[278] In a common variant, the *kakaw* beverage is further marked as *ta y-utal*, sustenance (fig. 63a, A3; MacLeod and Reents-Budet 1994: 115).

As in the preceding sections of the dedicatory sequence, Chocholá artists occasionally chose to modify and abbreviate the *kakaw* glyphic form. When it appears in a circular cartouche, for instance, the pictorially simplified reference to chocolate looks almost skull-like instead of resembling a fish (see fig. 19, A3). The syllable still retains a full-figure form that characterizes other aspects of Chocholá expression (e.g. the **lu** and **k'i** syllables). In other examples, the contents phrase has been so truncated that the fish (or fish fin) has disappeared altogether. It is only the **wa** suffix attached to the **tzi-hi** phrase and the *ta y-utal* block that indicates a kakaw food type (figs. 63, A4).[279] In other

[277] Grube (1990: 325) has suggested a transcription of *ti ch'ah ul* although advances syllabic understandings now indicate that it should be written *ti ch'aj ul* instead.
[278] I would like to thank David Stuart for pointing out the **ka** syllabic possibility to me.
[279] Interestingly, in another piece (fig. 105), the scribe carved *ta y-utal* (C1) and then seems to have started writing **ha-yi** (*u jaay*) but then shifted to **tzi-hi-(ka-)wa** (D1) before finishing the glyph block.

pieces, the chocolate reference can appear in yet further variations (see fig. 48, B2; MacLeod and Reents-Budet 1994: 115-118).

As the foregoing discussion indicates, the *kakaw* glyph was on of the most visually and orthographically varied terms used in Chocholá dedicatory formulae (for further variations, see fig. 48, B2, where instead of abbreviating the fish fin representation, the scribe chose to depict two fins and a full-figured fish/**wa** combination). In yet another permutation, the *kakaw* collocation takes a more typical form—the full-figured fish with reduplication marker and **wa** suffixing (fig. 64, A4). In this case, however, the fish form seems to have been modified to provide a visual analogue to the missing leaf nose bat head, although this view could change once the original vessel is examined.

Though they clearly refer to vessel contents (and hence the literal purpose of the ceramics in question), several of the other Chocholá dedicatory formulae are problematic.[280] One vessel (fig. 32, A2) contains a complex and hard to understand glyphic sequence composed of **u-k'e-ba-la** syllables (for *u-k'ebal?*). These signs are followed by a glyph block (A3) that Erik Boot (1997b: 1-3) read as **che-bu** (for *cheb* or possibly *cheeb*).[281] In Boot's eyes, this term refers to "the most important writing implement of the Maya scribe, the quill or paint brush itself," (Boot 1997a: 63; see also Coe 1977). Thus, while most Chocholá ceramics were meant to contain various liquids like *atole* or *kakaw* when function is indicated, this one might have had a very different use and may, in fact, indicate another type of folk classification (Boot 1997a: 66-67). Boot (1997a: 67) suggested that it acted as a receptacle for scribal implements, or as a

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[280] The distinction should be made between literal/actual use and a more metaphoric sense of function. Chocholá style ceramics, and other elite wares as well, of course, would have been part of a larger set of gift-giving practices. Such gifting and receiving would have solidified political ties, among other things. Thus, the ceramics, precisely because of their patronage and their correspondingly fine appearance (from both technical and iconographic standpoints), also served more nebulous functions in addition to their literal purpose as containers for holding liquid.

[281] The vowel disharmony evident in the Chocholá text (**che-bu**) and another example (**che-'e-bu**) may indicate two different ways of spelling this word: *cheb* or *cheeb*—the more recent Yucatecan glosses contain both spellings (Boot 1997a: 65, n. 6).

container for the cleaning (washing) of brushes, much like coffee cups are used to hold pens and pencils or to rinse brushes in today.[282] As such, this type of function is extremely unusual; all other examples that give information regarding actual use refer to different types of liquids.

The glyphic sequences relating to the actual function of the vessel complete the second section of the Chocholá dedicatory formula. The remaining group of Chocholá terms contains information concerning the patron of the vessel. This smaller section can also be split into three parts. A general nominal reference introduces the name phrase. Personal names follow and the third segment is made up of general titles and possible references to location. The 'general nominal reference' I just mentioned is made up of two expressions. **CHAK** precedes a syllabic form of **ch'o-ko**; this is the *chak ch'ok* or the great/red youth(s) (or perhaps even 'very youthful') term sometimes used to describe individuals (fig. 85, D1; Grube 1990: 325).[283]

The *chak ch'ok* phrase can either be followed, or replaced, by one of two other possible titles. The more common title reads **ke-le-ma** (*keleem?*; fig. 40, K1). In some cases a head variant replaces the standard **le** suffix and the **ke** syllable becomes almost unidentifiable (fig. 33, G1). Usually, though, the clearly visible **ma** suffix implies that such glyphic combinations are also meant to be read *keleem(?)* (fig. 47, J1). *Keleem* as a title further refers to the individual's youthfulness or at least a metaphorical sense of youth (David Stuart 2005 and 2009, pers. comms.). These terms, and this section of the longer nominal sequence, can be concluded by second title, possibly relating to the

[282] The specific suggestion of a container used for the cleaning of scribal implements is derived from contextual evidence; the only other references (two in number) to a container associated with *chebob* includes the term *u pokol* that seems to mean 'wash' (Boot 1997a: 65-66). Instead of referring to the washing of brushes, the *pokol* phrase might indicate a marking (or washing) of the body with paint (Boot 1997a: 67), which would certainly fit with the iconography found on the Chocholá pot in question.
[283] Whether this should be read metaphorically or literally is still open to debate.

*keleem* hieroglyph and reading **cho-lo-ma** presumably for *choloom* (figs. 108, J1; 109, I1).[284]

While titles are the most frequent pieces of nominal information provided in the Chocholá dedicatory formulae, scribes also occasionally included proper names. Not surprisingly, these are often extremely difficult to read although syllabic inclusions are often evident and individually decipherable. Some repetition occurs across the corpus and several individuals are named on two or more Chocholá vessels. Frequently, however, specific names only appear once and whether the phrase names a single person at all or rather acts as a more general (though relatively unpopular) descriptive term like c*hak ch'ok* or title (like those that follow the proper name phrase) remains unclear. Occasionally, Chocholá examples omit any personal names and either end after the discussion of the vessels' contents or after a series of more generic titles (figs. 64, 109).

Of the few decipherable personal names, **OHL-si-?-TOK** is one of the most important.[285] García Campillo (1992: 186-188) recognized that inscriptions at Oxkintok name this person who also appears on at least two Chocholá style ceramics (figs. 17, A1, B1, A2; 18, J4), further solidifying the Oxkintok connection. Other individuals are also named but these characters cannot be found in monumental inscriptions from either Oxkintok or other sites to date. Two pieces (figs. 39, A3; 83, B1]), for example, both incorporate a **ma-k'u?-bu/m'u?** glyphic combination now known to read *kalomte'* and function in a nominal way. In fact, the frequent use of *kalomte'* not only in the Chocholá dedicatory formula but also in the scene captions following the *u-baah* phrase (see Chapter 4) marks its titular nature, a pattern that is upheld in other situations where the collocation appears. The hieroglyphs surrounding this phrase name two different individuals. In the first vessel (fig. 39), the *kalomte'* title is preceded by a female head,

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[284] An unusual glyph block (A4) appears between the *kakaw* and *u-yuul*(?) expressions in one example (fig. 60), and is unreadable at this stage; does it relate to a personal name or is it a unique example that incorporates an uncommon title instead of the more normal *sajal*? Theoretically it could also modify the *kakaw* phrase but this would result in an unusual reading order.

[285] Boot (1997a: 1) first suggested this particular reading; García Campillo (1992: 188) originally suggested *Walas(i)*.

thus indicating that is part of a feminine name phrase, and followed by **OCH-K'IN-ni-ba-ka** (*ochk'in bak*, the west bak(ab)?; David Stuart 2009, pers. comm.) and the *saktenal/sakunal* locational title. The second (fig. 83) includes the *kalomte'* title in the scene caption but prefaces it with **u-ba-hi** (*u baah*) and ends the in-scene inscription with a standard *bakab* reference. Thus, while these two examples contain similar glyphs, they actually name different individuals, an elite lady from Oxkintok in the first case and the image of an important male in the second.

While other, undecipherable names and titles certainly occur, I would like to specifically mention four unusual examples before discussing place names and more standard titular references that round out the Chocholá dedicatory formulae. In the first case, (fig. 32, A4, A5) contains a name that Eric Boot (1997b: 3) has read as *Ixik Wi' Balam* (Lady Root Jaguar).[286] If Boot is correct in associating this vessel with a brush holder, then perhaps this female was an artist? On the second piece, (fig. 3, D1) seems to include an interesting *k'uhul ixik* phrase possibly naming another female patron/owner.[287] This seems to be associated, structurally, with a nominal phrase (although it could refer to the name of the vessel) reading: **no-jo-CHAAN-na** (*noj chan*, big/great sky/snake). An unusual snake head that looks almost like Calakmul's emblem glyph main sign follows. Third, Chocholá artists also used **AJAW** titles. These terms rarely appear in the current corpus, however, as is to be expected given that they are less frequently included in northern texts as a whole (see Grube 1994).[288] When they were used, they indicate the owner/patron's status as lord although he is never named as divine (*k'uhul*, i.e.

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[286] Interestingly, the last hieroglyph in this sequence has an upper element reminiscent of that which appears in the **OHL-si-?-TOK** name although in this case the head is clearly that of a jaguar.

[287] This dedicatory text is extremely hard to read, the collocation following the *k'uhul ixik* phrase may function as a series of titles or a list of names including *itzin chak (?)* (David Stuart 2009, pers. comm.).

[288] Indeed, scholars first assumed that northern lords did not use the *ajaw* title at all, in contrast to their southern neighbors and while several *ajaw* titles can be found in the northern record, at sites like Oxkintok and Uxmal, many centers either do not mention an *ajaw* or lack significant numbers of well preserved hieroglyphic inscriptions (see Grube 1994; Kowalski 1999).

paramount) in Chocholá cases. In fact, the dedicatory formula only includes one *ajaw* (fig. 42, C1). In this case, the final portion of the dedicatory formula reads *choloom sajal uyul y-ajaw(u?)*.

Place names come near the end of Chocholá texts. García Campillo (1992: 198-199), in communication with Grube, identified the *saktenal/sakunal* (**SAK-TE'-NAL**) title (figs. 30a, last glyph or 30b, C1; 41, B6) as a toponym for, or a reference to, the "concrete place" ("lugar concreto") now known as Oxkintok. Another difficult Oxkintok locational name occurs with some frequency. While it is currently undecipherable, the number 7 precedes a head variant in all cases (fig. 18, J5). **Ti-i-ho** also appears in one example (fig. 2, A6), spelled phonetically. *Tiho*, of course, is the ancient name for Mérida still used by Yucatec Maya today. The reference to Mérida is surprising, given the stylistic connection shared between Oxkintok and this and other ceramics (see Chapter 6). As such, it almost certainly indicates larger communication networks stretching from Oxkintok in the heart of the Puuc region to Tiho/Mérida further to the northeast. I expand upon these suggestions in the following two chapters.

Frequently, the Chocholá dedicatory formula closes the nominal section with between one and three common titles. These are **sa-ja-la u-yu-lu-? ba-ka-ba** or *sajal u-yul bakab* (fig. 47, K1, A1, B1).[289] The **u-yu-lu** phonetic structure can also appear as **u-yu-la** and may indicate a longer root vowel (*u-yuul*).[290] The *sajal* title is by far the most common; the *uyul* and *bakab* titles occur less frequently although their use is so standardized as to be a typical feature in Chocholá dedicatory texts. The three titles can appear in any combination, although always in the above order (*bakab* never precedes *sajal*, for example). *Sajal* and *bakab* are well-known, oft-used elite titles that appear in many monumental inscriptions across the Maya world as well as in the ceramic record. Maya scribes did not choose to use the *uyul* (or *u-yuul*) hieroglyph nearly as frequently, however, although it does occur on ceramics from the southern area. Grube (1990: 326)

[289] Grube (1990: 325) has suggested **ca-ja-la** (or **ca-ha-la**, according to the older syllabic understanding). The first syllable, however, appears as a clear **sa** in several examples (figs. 85, F1).
[290] Grube (1990: 326) suggests *uyulul* (fig. 47 vs. fig. 105).

noted that the root *yul* can be translated as "'polish' or 'smoothness' in the Cordemex dictionary." Thus, the *bakab* title is modified by the *u-yul(ul)* glyph and expresses "'the polish of the *bakab*,'" according to Grube (1990: 326). Such an identification, however, is uncertain in the current corpus, since at least two examples (figs. 22, A5, A6; 64, A5, A6) exist that end with the *u-yul(ul)* phrase and omit the *bakab* title. Could *u-yul(ul)* then modify *sajal*? This seems unlikely since the reading order remains constant (*u-yul(ul)* always follows *sajal*). Barbara MacLeod and Dorie Reents-Budet (1994: 133) instead connect *u-yul* with Cordemex definitions that "suggest a meaning of 'work' or 'craft.'" In southern examples, this term is frequently paired with another hieroglyph and followed by nominal phrases, which lead MacLeod and Reents-Budet (1994: 133) to propose the idea that this phrase names individual workshops. In Chocholá examples, the *u-yul* phrase is rarely followed by nominal information and often completes the dedicatory formula.

Chocholá scribes continued their idiosyncratic approach to dedicatory texts in this section and often tended to provide different, distinctive spellings for some of the common titles. In contrast to the standard writing of *bakab* as **ba-ka-ba**, several Chocholá artists instead chose to replace the second **ba** with a **KAB** sign. The text then reads **ba-ka-KAB** (where the first **ka** simply provides a phonetic complement for the final **KAB** sign; figs. 16, A5; 60, A6). In other cases, this syllabic-logographic pattern can be altered to include additional complements: **ba-KAB-ba-a**.

In this context, the writing of *sajal* is remarkably consistent and consists of the same syllabic forms used over and over again to spell **sa-ja-la** (fig. 108, K1). While both the title and the way in which it is carved demonstrates a pan-Maya approach to titular phrases, it also reflects the Chocholá craftsman's desire to reanalyze oft-used glyphic forms. A perfect example of this trend occurs in the standard rendition of the **sa** syllable. Artists truncated the **sa** component so that only the left half is visible to the left of the larger glyph block, as is typical across the Maya world. At the same time, they inserted and emphasized a rope-and-fringe-like element visually linked to the series of lines and dots that create the bilaterally symmetrical form of the full **sa** syllable seen in so many

monumental inscriptions.[291] In this way, they participated in a much larger hieroglyphic tradition while also creating distinctive products within that scribal approach. The consistent use of this **sa** variant also supports the idea that many of the ceramics under consideration were created by a cohesive, restricted scribal community within the Oxkintok area (see Chapter 6): the **sa** alternative presented by Chocholá artists is highly consistent in the corpus while not apparently representing an obvious solution to Maya authors' desire for pictorial variation since it is not commonly used elsewhere. Furthermore, while Chocholá artisans adhered to certain patterns, which indicates a certain amount of control in the form of an overarching power structure, they also had a fair degree of freedom. In a particularly beautiful example in storage in the Museo Regional de Yucatán, Palacio Cantón, for example, the scribe used the standard **sa** in writing *sajal* but changed the **ja** to what looks like a **tzi**. While this might be either a rare example of scribal error or a heretofore unknown title (*satzil?)*, in the context of Chocholá production, the scribe more likely chose to play with the visual forms of the other components of the *sajal* collocation.

Evidently a large number of Chocholá vessels were created for *bakabs* or *sajals*. Unfortunately, we do not know exactly how to translate such titles, despite the fact that they are familiar inclusions on all forms of media. The *bakab* title was associated with high ranking officials and could occur in association with other monikers. *Bakabs* could also be further codified directionally (e.g. the west—*ochk'in*—*bakab* named on a Chocholá pot already mentioned) (fig. 39). As Houston, Stuart and Taube (2006: 62-63) note when discussing another Chocholá piece (fig. 105),

> It usually appears at the end of long strings of titles and has some relation to mythological figures known as the *bakab*, who played a role in Postclassic Yucatan as supporters of heaven 'so that it should not fall' (Tozzer [1966] 1941: 13). During the Classic period, however, the term applied exclusively to human beings, including some women known as Ixbakab. It is now evident that the title can be disassembled into meaningful parts. This is made possible in the first place by a clue from

[291] In one unusual vessel, the **sa** syllable has been so drastically re-analyzed that it approaches the 'false 7' form of the **a** syllable so that the block as a whole approximates **a-ja-la** instead of **sa-ja-la** (fig. 72, A1).

> later uses of the title, found on incised vessels from the Puuc area of Yucatan, Mexico (Grube 1990…: fig. 7). The final elements spell out [ka-KAB], the expression for 'earth,' especially in the sense of agricultural soil with fertilizer (a key element within is the sign for 'excrement'; fig. 2.6b). The first element is usually the syllable [ba], but early examples from areas to the south, in Guatemala, show that this element began as the word sign [BAAH], the sign for 'head' or 'top' (Houston 1986: fig. 9). The problem is determining what this might mean. Was the title 'top of the earth' or, as with other words, did it contain a hidden particle, *a(j)*, meaning 'person of,' as in *aj baak*, 'person of captive,' 'captor' or 'warrior'? In either case, the term assigned a key geographical role to high-status figures at Maya courts, a metaphorical and perhaps literal 'hilltop' that supported the sky (a reference to elevated palace dwellings and temples controlled by lords?) or someone in charge, ultimately, of agricultural terrain.

In the Chocholá corpus, then, the frequently named *bakabs* were connected specifically with fertile land and possibly with mythological entities responsible for keeping the world whole. Thus, the title functioned in a manner similar to the iconographic programs—it explicitly reified the owner/patron's authority by referring to the source of that power.

Chocholá artists also favored another significant title, *sajal* as I have just discussed. Subsidiary lords in particular, throughout the Late Classic Maya world, could receive the *sajal* moniker. Houston and Stuart (2001: 61) have tentatively suggested the following translation: "one who fears." Regardless of its exact reading, the Maya treated it in the same way they approached the *ajaw* designation: elites were "'seated' or 'bound' in office" (Houston and Stuart 2001: 61). While the term *sajal* may indicate a subsidiary governor, people holding the title were named during important rituals at major courts. Furthermore, not only is it possible that *ajaws* concurrently held *sajal* status, they also seem to have been able to switch back and forth between the two terms (Houston and Stuart 2001: 62). As with the *bakab* nominal marker, *sajals* were apparently further subdivided into hierarchical groups led by a 'head' or 'first' *sajal* (although such additional designation does not occur in the Chocholá corpus to date).

If the idea that *sajals* governed sectors of the population controlled by a paramount lord finds credence, then the frequent use of that title on Chocholá vessels fits

nicely into the panorama of northern political organization in place no later than the Terminal Classic as suggested by William Ringle and George Bey (2001). Ringle and Bey demonstrated that extensive networks connected ancillary centers with preeminent ones during the Terminal and Post Classic periods and that paramount lords held sway over their territories by delegating power to dependent elites based at locations outside the central site. These 'governors,' for lack of a better term, would frequently travel to, and participate in court functions at, the king's center (probably in the quadrangular spaces so well known in Terminal Classic Yucatán). Given what we know of Late Classic organization at Oxkintok (see Chapters 6, 7), it seems that such political strategies have roots in the earlier Late Classic period. Oxkintok certainly controlled an extended territory and the site itself included several locations where court could be held. As a result, the Oxkintok lord **OHL-si-?-TOK'** may have commissioned a number of Chocholá pots to give to his *sajals* in an exchange that at once tied them to him and visa versa.[292] In the proposed schema, a host of *sajals* would have been attached to one paramount lord. If this is the case, then the numerous *sajal* references on Chocholá pots function rather anonymously when lacking additional, more specific nominal information and may have allowed the king to stockpile such gifts and dole them out as needed.

*Kalomte'* as a titular phrase also occurs, although it only rarely appears in the dedicatory formula texts and, in contrast, was a much more common inclusion in scene captions (figs. 9b, A7; 21, C1). Like *bakab*, *kalomte'* can have directional modifiers. It also does not necessarily have a lower ranking than the divine lord designation although there seems to be a hierarchy among different *kalomte's*, who can take on additional world tree associations (David Stuart 2009, pers. comm.). Thus, while it appears in governmental settings, it seems to have other, extra-political meanings connected with religion and the maintenance of order as well as being associated with major centers/polities (Houston and Stuart 2001: 60).

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[292] Interestingly, Ringle and Bey (2001: 269-270) note that Post Classic accounts name such subsidiary governors as *batabs* which may indicate an overlap between the *bakab* and *sajal* designations discussed here.

As I have already noted, the *ajaw* designation occurs very rarely. Furthermore, it does not contain *k'uhul* (divine/paramount) suffixing. Many Maya elites are called *ajaws* and (as part of their activities related to this position, satisfied administrative and ceremonial duties). A simple *ajaw* moniker did not necessarily indicate supreme rule and could be associated with "other nonregnal titles" (Houston and Stuart 2001: 60). Ultimately, all Chocholá titles conferred prestige, a fact that would have been emphasized when such titles were publicly displayed on fine vessels during major feasting events.

### *Artists' Hands*

The issue of individual hands and larger scribal groups also bears consideration. As I showed in the preceding chapter, many artists were individually responsible for creating multiple pieces in the Chocholá style. Based on a close, stylistic analysis of the hieroglyphic corpus, I would like to add a number of identifications to those already suggested in the preceding chapter. Additionally, a host of examples shares remarkable similarities without exhibiting the diagnostic traits that would allow the recognition of a single hand. In these cases, I hypothesize groups of closely-knit artists working together to produce stylistically similar pieces.

I would like to start with the most obvious examples first. In two pieces (figs. 29, 45), we not only see the same artist at work, we also see the use of identical texts and the duplication of syllabic signs. The two texts read as follows: *u jaay y-uk'ib ti tzihil kakaw* (**u-ja-yi yu-k'i-bi ti-tzi-hi li ka-ka-wa**), which is typical not only of the Chocholá dedicatory formula but also ceramic dedications more generally.

The similarity exhibited by these two ceramics goes further than just using the same forms to create the highly formulaic dedicatory text. The inclusions within each glyphic sign replicate one another almost exactly on these two ceramics. Simply consider the first term, *u jaay*. The **u** is one of the most used syllables in the ancient Maya hieroglyphic record and occurs in several basic forms in the Chocholá corpus. The two ceramics under consideration here both use the **u** syllable composed of two vertically

arranged circles. While the two circles are standard, the central visual element can take a number of different forms. In this case, a series of horizontal, parallel lines appear, in contrast to other options both within the corpus and in Maya texts generally. The rest of the two texts bear the same consistent rendition of the glyphic shapes and their constituent elements. Small deviations in the representation of the **k'i** syllable are the only exception to this duplication, although the wing form is used in each case instead of the full-figure bird.

The marked similarity shared by these two text strings indicates that the same hand created them. The individual glyphs reflect minute differences—one seems to be more curvilinear, for example, while the other has a kind of vertical stretching of the glyph block. In comparison with other signs from typical Chocholá pots, however, the level of similarity between these two examples is unique and therefore particularly striking (see Boot 2006). In addition to the repeated words, visual details caused by the specific motor skills of the artist in question support this identification. The glyphs from each pot tend to look like they've been pulled slightly up and to the right, for instance, a pattern especially noticeable in the first three glyphs, with their rounded-square forms. This idiosyncratic feature reflects exactly the kind of subconscious process and individualized development of motor skills that allows for the identification of artists' hands.[293]

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[293] While the first four glyphs are carefully incised into the vessel wall in each case, the last sign in one piece (fig. 29) seems to indicate a different technical approach. The deep impressions that can be seen on both the left and right sides of the glyph block contrast markedly with the incised lines evident in the same glyph from the other example. Furthermore, there is a variation in the thickness of line that does not occur in any of the other glyphs from the other vessel nor in any preceding the final glyph from this vessel (fig. 29). Both of these collocations end the dedicatory sequences in each case and, in doing so, curve around the bottom of the vessel form. The varying depths and line thicknesses evident in this example, especially in the last glyph, may indicate that the artist used individual stamps to create each incised hieroglyphic block. Thus, the use of a stamp on the curved base of the pot would require a rocking movement to impress all edges of the stamp into the wet clay. The use of a stamp, in turn, explains the deeper impressions found in isolated areas of the hieroglyph. If the potter did use stamps, he had not developed them yet (or chose not to use them) when he created the other vessel (fig.

As I have suggested previously, ceramics can also exhibit a number of similarities that, while not strong enough to allow the identification of a single hand, imply the work of a close-knit artistic group. Such a practice results in a cohesive stylistic manifestation, while diagnostic differences become apparent on closer inspection and serve to mark the production of different artists within the larger group. One particular subset of Chocholá ceramics demonstrates just such stylistic affinity (figs. 30, 42, 47, 52, 105, 108-110). The elongated rectangular glyph block seen in these pieces is consistent and distinctive within the Chocholá style. In addition to the literal flatness of the glyphic sequences and the preference for specific glyphic forms, all of the texts in this group exhibit similar sign usage. The repetitive use of certain words (like the reference to carving) and forms (like crossed bands or animate forms of the **u** syllable when it appears in the *u jaay* collocation) implies that these ceramics were produced by a group of artists that created ceramics in close proximity to one another. A close working environment would lead to a series of intimate interactions that the term 'influence' seems too vague to describe. The resulting artistic relationships coalesced in a sort of group mentality, even if strict laws regarding the use of certain glyphs were not voiced. Consequently, the apparent differences—some artists chose to emphasize the flatness of the glyphic band while others created a slight degree of modeling, for example—in the midst of homogenous representational forms supports the idea that different artists worked alongside one another in creating such vessels.

The use of a flatter and a slightly more three-dimensional aesthetic are interconnected, however. Not only do all of the Chocholá examples mentioned above demonstrate the same desire for a particular glyphic shape, one artist clearly chose to work in both stylistic sets. One vessel (fig. 47) indicates slight modeling while another (fig. 42) emphasizes the flatter appearance of the glyphic sequence yet the same person created both, as indicated by the peculiar rendition of the **chi** hand (figs. 42, G1; 47, E1). Unlike other examples, this hand has a hook that comes off the palm and overlaps with

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45), which gives credence to the idea that these two vessels were manufactured sequentially.

the preceding **yi** syllable. Both **lu**-bat collocations also relate to each other visually (figs. 42, H1, A2; 47, F1, G1). While the earspool form exhibits some iconographic differences in this case, the consistent shape that the bat head takes—e.g. the recurving snout and the treatment of the mouth—seems to result from the same hand.

One of the vessels just mentioned (fig. 42) further links with another piece (fig. 109). The **lu** syllables, for example, look almost like exact duplicates (fig. 109, E1). An additional example (fig. 30) can also be included in this group. Like the **chi** hand mentioned earlier, the comparative vessel (fig. 30a, third from the last glyph) includes a stylistically distinctive form of the *sajal* glyph. In this case, the **sa** syllable contains an extra vertical line which does not appear elsewhere in the corpus, except in the *sajal* title on this vessel (fig. 42). The visual parallels between this group and another pot (fig. 108) also seems to indicate the same hand or, at the very least, the same group of producers.

A closer look at similar details from other ceramics in the set defined above indicates the presence of another artistic hand responsible for multiple ceramics in the same production group. The second ceramic grouping, while clearly participating within the same stylistic rubric that governed glyph production in the first, also demonstrates a number of small differences. Each individual glyph block is squarer in nature rather than exhibiting the elongated rectangular form mentioned earlier. The crossed bands that form the **u** in *u jaay* are also thicker and cover more space (see figs. 52b, C2; 109, F1). The interior line separating the **K'IN** sign from the sky sign in the second sign of the introductory sequence also slants upward in another piece (fig. 109, B1) while the straightness of this same division is clear elsewhere (fig. 108, B1). The full-figure form of the **k'i** syllable in *y-uk'ib* also seems to curve down slightly around the **bi** syllable in two cases (figs. 52b, D2; 109, G1) while the creator more carefully delineated the bottom line of the bird's body from the underlying syllabic form in the preceding group of vessels.[294] The use of a thicker glyphic style is also seen in another piece (fig. 105;

[294] Similar patterns can be identified in the fragmentary rim text found at Oxkintok and presented by Velázquez Valadés (et al. 2005) and colleagues. The top line of the rim band may also exhibit slight dips at the ends of each glyphic block (figs. 52, 109).

compare the thickness of some of the prefixes used in the introductory sections of the dedicatory formula, for instance).[295]

If the preceding analysis is correct, then, two artists working in the same workshop can now be identified and were responsible for the production of six and four ceramics respectively.[296] It is interesting to note that many of these ceramics take the calabash shape instead of exhibiting imagery. Thus, the form does indeed seem to indicate a subspecialty within the larger Chocholá corpus, as expected. It is important to note that while this scribal group also seems to have produced smooth walled ceramics, none of the stylized gourd shapes can be connected to either a specific artist or the group as a whole. Whether these patterns reflect a different scribal community, geographic location and/or temporal moment in Chocholá production remains unknown.

Based on the general shape and appearance of the hieroglyphic sequences just considered, another cluster of ceramics can also be tentatively connected with the scribal group identified above. At least four examples (figs. 36, 100, 110, 112) seem to cluster together and might all be part of the same scribal community. Given the fragmented state in which some of these ceramics now exist and the partial glyphic sequence exhibited by others, further suggestions regarding specific attribution cannot be made at this time, although a cursory examination seems to imply a number of other hands.

The issue of larger scribal groups also applies to the use of circular cartouches. While only six Chocholá ceramics incorporate the circular cartouche, this number is significant when compared to other ceramic and monumental corpuses. Very few works of art contain any circular glyphs at all and, when they do, do so in extremely reduced numbers (for a further discussion of the circular cartouche outside the Chocholá corpus,

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[295] Yet another vessel (fig. 30) could also be seen as having a 'thicker' glyphic style. In my eyes, however, the lack of precision in some of the glyphic lines results from carving while the clay was in a wetter state and thus more pliable, not from individual scribal styles.

[296] Each artist could, of course, have made a significantly larger number of vessels that have not yet come to light. Indeed, they may already form part of the known corpus. I employ conservative methods for identifying individual artists in the ceramic record in the effort to avoid misclassifying certain examples.

please refer to Chapter 6). Furthermore, the circular pattern of glyphic rendition is connected with great antiquity in the Maya region (see Taube 2004b: fig. 24).

The Chocholá use of the circular cartouche can be grouped into two sets. In the first collection, the artist chose to almost completely fill the cartouche with glyphic information (figs. 8, 20, 21). The scribe created a double outline as part of the framing cartouche in all three pieces, and the glyphic sequences all seem to slant slightly up and to the right (this pattern is especially evident in the **u-ja-yi** and **sa-ja-la** collocations).[297] In the second set, by contrast, a circular setting resulted when the artist simply carved the glyph into the ceramic wall without the use of an additional frame, like the double outline seen above (figs. 19, 22).[298] This scribe chose different dedicatory phrases in each case but also decided to include a particularly skull-like rendition of the *kakaw* glyph (otherwise underrepresented in the corpus) as the third term in the sequence in both instances. Furthermore, despite the differences in sign usage, the same overarching style occurs in both—the artist paid more attention to detail in creating the iconographic panels while the hieroglyphic strings contain little of the fine incising evident in the images.[299]

The standardization of the Chocholá glyphic sequence encourages the identification of other hands as well, although additional groups are harder to identify. Another possible connection can be made between three other pieces (figs. 17, 24), for example. The texts are reversed in both cases. Furthermore, the **u** in the **u-ja-yi** expression (at C2 and D1 respectively) is rendered in the same way, with parallel vertical

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[297] The use of different syllabic elements in the spelling of the same glyphic sequence is a bit unusual and might speak to a workshop/mentor-pupil scenario instead of a single hand.

[298] The sixth vessel to incorporate circular cartouches seems to fall somewhere in between these two basic divisions (fig. 23).

[299] This may indicate that, in this case, the scribe and artist were not the same. Consider the small details (like water dots and fringe) added to the scrolls framing the scene. Here the lines are clearly defined and precisely rendered, in contrast to the somewhat thicker use of carving to create prefixes in the accompanying text, for example. Conversely, such line variation may indicate something about the artistic process: if the glyphs were carved first, they might have been rendered at a point in the vessels' creation when the clay was still slightly wet or loose, making it harder to create the smooth, sharp lines seen in the carving.

lines connecting the upper and lower circles. The use of a distinctive **ja** in this glyphic block follows a similar pattern. The two lobes that always occur in the **ja** sign have been shifted to the left and up so that they curve around the left side of the inner circle. They are often more rectilinear in nature as well. In both pieces, the **bi** sign in *y-uk'ib* (C1 and C3, respectively) also seems to exhibit the type of individualized form that results from an individual artist's particular motor skills. In this case, the **bi** syllable always curves up slightly towards the tail of the full-figured **k'i** bird so that the left side of the **bi** form is always larger than the right side. In a further visual parallel, a double outline creates the internal line framing the five dots of the **bi** syllable.

I have already suggested that another pair of vessels (figs. 15, 48) were produced by the same artist based on the use of a square scene boundary to frame lords interacting with other individuals (see Chapter 4). The glyphic parallels solidify this association given that the same exact text, using the same exact syllables, appears in each. I would also suggest that a third piece (fig. 84) forms part of this group. It displays a similar initial glyph and square scene panels although these panels contain two entities who interact in a much more dynamic fashion. The scribe also chose to incorporate the God N dedicatory term in all these pieces (B1, A2 and B2, respectively), which, while typical in southern dedicatory formulae, rarely appears in the Chocholá sequence. Such distinctive stylistic choices encourage the identification of a specific artist. Furthermore, this individual did not produce the other sets of ceramics discussed in the preceding pages. Indeed, he was probably part of a different scribal group, given the differences in form and the atypical use of the God N dedicatory term. General provenience supports such conclusions, as I discuss in Chapter 6.

In the preceding chapter I also suggested that the ballplayer scenes could typically be grouped together based on the dramatic visual parallels shared between vessels. The hieroglyphic texts support this suggestion. In one example (fig. 35) especially, the squared glyphic symbols and the geometric relationship between syllables are clearly reminiscent of those found on another ballplayer vessel (fig. 33). Based on iconographic parallels, I also suggested that another vessel (fig. 17), while not produced by the same

artist, was probably manufactured by the same group of scribes. As I have shown above, based on hieroglyphic correspondences, this piece (fig. 17) can be further connected with two other pots (figs. 24, 45), which implies that a single group of artists made significant numbers of Chocholá vessels emphasizing the ballplayer while also incorporating other iconographic forms.

Yet another scribe was probably responsible for creating the slightly more three-dimensional diagonal texts found on two other ceramics (figs. 68, 103). These collocations exhibit more of a vertical stretching. What is more, the **bi** sign (A1 and B1, respectively) exhibits the same kind of form (circular with a slightly squared bottom). In these variations, a full inner circle forms the internal structure instead of the three-sided curve seen in other Chocholá renditions of this syllable. The visual correspondences would then seem to indicate the existence of yet another scribal community.

An exact syllabic correspondence between two vessels depicting young lords provides an example of yet another artist's work (figs. 34, 63). As in the other examples provided above, exactly the same signs are used in exactly the same way. Furthermore, upon close examination, the **k'i** syllables (A2 in both) reveal a dip in the wing's top line while the **yu** knots demonstrate a particular kind of curvature—the loops move out away from the main glyphic block as they curve back around the central element. While I have yet to examine in person the actual text found on another piece (fig. 9; only available in drawings), the use of the same glyphic forms and the apparent style of the text sequence imply that it too should be included in this group.

I have identified the work of individual artists based on dramatic visual similarities in the rendition of the same sign across vessels. I have also used visual parallels as a way of suggesting the existence of multiple artistic groups. While artists certainly did not simply use the same syllabic signs and glyphic collocations over and over again, identifying stylistic correspondences becomes much more difficult when considering variable features. Occasionally, however, the visual parallels are so striking as to suggest the existence of a single producer even when different hieroglyphic strings appear. Head variants fill the text on one piece (fig. 18), for instance, while a more

syllabically oriented string occurs in another (fig. 32). Both texts name the Oxkintok lord **OHL-?-si-TOK'**, which would suggest creation within a single scribal community or, at the most, a closely knit group of such communities. The **ja** syllable in the opening term found in both cases (A1 in both) indicates further specificity regarding production. It exhibits a slight hook in the bottom left corner that does not appear anywhere else within the Chocholá corpus. A minor variation in the treatment of the left corner might also occur in another example (fig. 39, A1) although this is far from certain without the actual pot or high-resolution photographs on hand. The head—a feminine title (A2)—that follows seems to parallel, stylistically, the same head found in the inscription on one of the vessels just mentioned (fig. 18, A3), although less room has been devoted to it so it is, by necessity, simplified in form. While this association remains purely conjectural at this stage, a single scribal hand responsible for all three vessels would make particular sense, given that toponyms specific to Oxkintok were also included.

Finally, the distinctive depth and style of carving may further connect one of the pieces just mentioned with another vessel inscription (figs. 3, 32). The writing exhibits similar calligraphic qualities. The unusual hieroglyphs found in each case seem to generally support this identification, but actual repetitions between the glyph sequences are lacking. The text strings are so individualized, rather than expressing the more standardized dedicatory formula, that the correspondences would be much more subtle in their manifestation.

## *Conclusion*

As the discussion above has shown, the Chocholá dedicatory formula is typical in the type of information it includes. The Introductory Sign begins the dedicatory sequence and information regarding the vessels' carving, contents and owner/patron follows in a highly structured manner. Furthermore, several texts clearly underline the historical connection with Oxkintok and its surrounding areas, a fact I return to in following chapters. A few brief comments regarding the most typical inclusions are now in order.

Chocholá artists clearly valued the dedicatory formula since it is included over half the time. Furthermore, within the greater sub-category of this dedicatory text string, labeling of the vessels in question as *u jaay y-uk'ib* (drinking cups) was important, given the marked repetition of these terms. Generic titles such as *sajal*, *u-yul(ul)* and *bakab* were clearly significant, but other, higher titles, like the occasional *ajaw* designation also occur. Other typical inclusions, such as the Initial Sign, the **K'IN/pi** glyph, the **lu**-bat signs referring to the carving of the vessel, and the *chak ch'ok* or *keleem/choloom* titles were less popular, only appearing, at the most, about one third of the time. Of all these terms, it is the Initial Sign, unsurprisingly, that is the most reproduced. Specific names are noteworthy, but rarely are they repeated across vessels. At this point only the **OHL-?-si-TOK'** figure from Oxkintok appears, verifiably, on more than one Chocholá style pot Several other examples name women through the inclusion of the female head variant and thus indicate that women formed an important subset of patrons/owners.

A few general comments on the writing style associated with Chocholá ceramics also emphasizes some key features. Artists frequently reversed the reading order so that it moves from right to left instead of the more typical left to right sequencing. In its most common form, this reversal affects the text as a whole as well as the individual glyphic blocks (e.g. figs. 24, 27, 35). In other words, the glyphs are reoriented so that they face right in the new right-to-left reading order; the viewer still sees the syllabic prefixing first while reading and in the case of head variants, the entity faces to the right. Thus, Chocholá scribes maintained the internal logic of the textual inclusions according to Maya standards even when they chose to reverse the reading order.

The unusual variations of standard glyphic forms, combined with atypical reading orders, far from implying a barely literate author and readership, seems to instead mark an extra-literate group that appreciated such textual complexity and the playfulness associated with the manipulation of basic structural principles. One vessel in particular (fig. 66) seems to take this pattern to extremes. The traditional order has been completely ruptured and the viewer must search through both the scene captions and a (basically) vertical text in order to find the characteristic dedicatory formula sequences. The initial

glyph begins the scene caption (B2), but the viewer must look to the third glyph of the vertical text to find the *u jaay* phrase (A3), before jumping up to the first glyph in that line to read *y-uk'ib* (A1). The statement about the freshness of the vessel's contents then occurs in the second slot of the vertical panel (A2) and titles occur both at the end of the vertical text (A6) and in the middle of the scene caption (B3), while the bat head referring to carving occurs below the title in a truly unusual linguistic progression.

Not only must the reader jump back and forth between caption text and vertical string in an unpredictable, erratic manner, an unusual orientation can be seen in certain glyph blocks. Chocholá artists reversed the reading order of isolated textual sequences and even reoriented the constituent glyphic collocations so that they face right instead of left. In this case, however, the majority of the glyphs face to the left, as is typical of Maya writing generally, while the one that includes the leaf nose bat (B4) as its main sign faces to the right. Even within the heavily idiosyncratic corpus, such a reversal is unique. When Chocholá artists played with the arrangement of glyphic forms they did so consistently throughout a given text string.

A close analysis of Chocholá dedicatory formulae has also indicated that individual artists and larger scribal communities created a significant number of ceramics. If my analysis is correct, four artists created (at least) two ceramics each. Two additional producers made between two and three vessels. Four people carved three apiece, while two individuals demonstrated heightened productivity and created four and six pieces respectively. Such numbers become even more impressive in light of fact that they represent conservative estimates; each potter probably produced many more ceramics that either lack the amount of idiosyncratic detail needed for identification or that have yet to come to light. I also suggested the presence of several artistic groups based on the strong visual parallels that lacked the level of detail needed for the identification of individual hands. Based on these larger similarities, evidence exists for at least three communities. Two of these artistic/scribal groups produced at least five ceramics while the third was responsible for the manufacture of at least ten vessels. These numbers seem to indicate an extended network of closely related potters. Such

conclusions should be qualified, however; the differences between the three different groups do not necessarily indicate that each forms a distinct assemblage. One artist or company might have chosen to create multiple stylistic subsets. Furthermore, the strict separation of such groupings does not allow for potential variables such as stylistic growth or individual artistic development. The same conditional statement also applies to those ceramics that have yet to be included in such categorizations.

This chapter has presented the specific structure of, and variation found in, the Chocholá dedicatory formula. Currently, statistical analysis indicates that Chocholá artisans paid particular attention to certain areas of the dedicatory formula. The common naming of the vessel type in the current corpus indicates its significance, for example, and it is unlikely that further additions to the Chocholá corpus will alter this picture much. The hieroglyphic sequences have also provided a wealth of information regarding individual artists and scribal groups. My analysis has enabled the identification of several individual hands at work in the Chocholá style. More importantly, the body of Chocholá hieroglyphs also demonstrates strong scribal continuity and speaks to a larger artistic community.

Ultimately, the idiosyncratic nature of the Chocholá dedicatory formula also speaks to elaborate contexts of production, dissemination and consumption that encouraged innovation and experimentation at a highly restricted, literate level. Not surprisingly, such intellectual display is a hallmark of feasting pottery throughout Mesoamerica (Pohl 1994: 12-13). In this case, however, the idiosyncratic nature of the style became synonymous with the Oxkintok sphere of influence and set the Chocholá corpus apart from other elite objects in the ancient Maya material record. Apparently this form of message dissemination was successful, at least in the short term, and patrons/artists in other areas evidently appropriated such specific expression for their own purposes of sociopolitical/economic advancement (see Chapters 6, 7).

## Chapter 6
## The Chocholá Style: Developing a Sense of Context

### *Introduction*

As I noted in my second chapter, ceramics identified as Chocholá did not have any published archaeological anchor as late as the 1980s. With the explosion of archaeological activity in the north over the past several decades, new data has come to light regarding the distribution of Chocholá pieces. I have already presented this information in Chapter 2, but the important sociopolitical implications of such data were overshadowed by the goal of that chapter—to present a historiography of the way the style has been approached within Maya studies. I would now like to develop a cohesive picture of Chocholá distribution based on verifiable provenience and suggested find locations. Looted ceramics can then be connected with anchored examples based on shared stylistic attributes.

García Campillo (1992) already linked a handful of ceramics to Oxkintok based on epigraphic evidence. Velázquez Valadés (et al. 2005) and colleagues provided further proof for the Oxkintok connection by presenting several archaeologically provenienced fragments (see Chapter 2). While such archaeological information is invaluable, it only applies to a tiny subset of the corpus. Stylistic analysis again provides a significant avenue of investigation. As I mentioned previously (Chapter 3), style is both temporally and geographically specific. Thus, the in situ ceramic and monumental iconographic and hieroglyphic programs provide a wealth of information that can be connected with trends in the Chocholá corpus. Not only have Chocholá sherds been found at Oxkintok and an Oxkintok lord named on several unprovenienced examples, an extensive body of looted pieces can now be connected with the site through an extension of the stylistic principles seen in the ceramics and the architectural programs associated with the site. In this way, further analysis extends our understanding of Chocholá manufacture and distribution, elevating Oxkintok from a site merely connected with Chocholá production to one responsible for the largest and most cohesive body of ceramic material in the current the

corpus. Oxkintok artists did not create all Chocholá vessels, however. A comparative consideration of particular examples and the archaeological, iconographic and epigraphic evidence from other sites indicates that the Chocholá style enjoyed wider distribution and was manufactured in small numbers at diverse locations. Thus, a reconsideration of the archaeological and stylistic evidence from other centers complements the Oxkintok data and results in important implications regarding far-reaching exchange networks and sociopolitical interactions in Late Classic Yucatán.

### *Archaeological Data for the Chocholá Style*

General eyewitness reports (i.e. Stephens 1843, see Chapter 2) suggest that illicit and/or early excavations at Ticul, Peto, Jaina, Acanceh and Calcehtok produced Chocholá examples.[300] Xcalumkin also seems to be connected with the style. Grube (1990: 327-328), for instance, identified an individual from Xcalumkin as one who was named on a vessel that he connected with the Chocholá corpus (fig. 57).[301] While the pot in question can no longer be linked with the Chocholá corpus, the large artistic workshops apparently in place at the site make it a possible Chocholá production center. Officially sanctioned excavations have also uncovered a small number of Chocholá specimens. Archaeological fieldwork at Oxkintok, Uxmal (?), Xkipché and the Tiho (Mérida) region resulted in Chocholá finds. Such ceramics may also have been unearthed at Dzibilchaltún and Xpuhil.

The most secure and extensive excavation data for Chocholá ceramics comes from Oxkintok. Two ceramics were located in a tomb (Tomb 8) found in Structure C-14 in the Ah Canul group, dating to the Late Classic occupational period contemporary with

[300] As I indicate in my subsequent discussion of such information, Oxkintok is located near and over a series of caves. This cave area has been called Calcehtok and has been differentiated from Oxkintok in the literature. In actuality, however, the two were probably indistinguishable anciently.

[301] In the early 1980s, Peter Mathews (in a series of personal communications with other epigraphers) identified the name found on this piece and connected it with nominal phrases found at Xcalumkin (David Stuart 2009, pers. comm.).

Chocholá production (Schmidt 2004: 32). Both ceramics (figs. 37, 38) are clear examples of the canonical grouping within the Chocholá style. The first (fig. 37) presents yet another example of the standard Chocholá feathered serpent, complete with a crosshatched body and scrolls emerging from an open maw. The second (fig. 38) introduces unique iconography to the corpus in the form of world tree imagery associated with disembodied heads and surmounted by two birds. What appears to be a blade or spine has been inserted between the two birds at the apex of the tree. Despite the foliation that surrounds it, this device takes a form similar to the bloodletting paraphernalia often found in representations of the Quadripartite Badge, which seems to connect it with the sacrificial themes popular in the Chocholá corpus. The use of birds in this case may also complement preferences specific to the owner, as an elaborate avian mask composed of golden colored mosaic tiles was also deposited in the tomb. As a pair, the two vessels allude to the dualities of earth/water and sky, a structural precept emphasized in the use of similar paired opposites at the outset of a number of Chocholá dedicatory texts (see Chapter 5). A series of five sherds from two additional vessels were also scattered throughout the site (Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005). While these ceramic remains are highly fragmentary in nature and do not contain any imagery, they are clearly identifiable as Chocholá based on the appearance of diagnostic glyphic forms (see Chapter 5). The Oxkintok tomb finds are particularly important because they are among the only whole pieces to have verifiable context.

Who exactly was the person with whom these two pots were buried? He clearly held a position of importance in Oxkintok at the time of his death since the tomb was placed in one of Oxkintok's tall buildings overlooking other architectural groups (Schmidt 2004: 32). The grave goods not only included specialized ceramics but also a host of other elite objects (Schmidt 2004). A carved bone, for instance, names the Oxkintok lord **OHL-si-?-TOK'** first connected with the Chocholá style by García Campillo (1992). Initially, the appearance of one of the paramount ruler's possessions in this burial might suggest that the person was none other than **OHL-si-?-TOK'** himself. The youth of the individual—initial studies of the bones indicate that he was between 12

and 14 years old (Schmidt 2004: 32)—indicates that he could not be the Oxkintok lord, however, even though he clearly enjoyed an elevated status during his lifetime. While some of the dates relating to **OHL-si-?-TOK**'s life are still debated (see García Campillo 1992: 194), the number of inscriptions and the various locations in which they were found at Oxkintok indicate an extended period of reign enduring well beyond adolescence (Varela Torrecilla 1998: 41, 45). The youth buried in Tomb 8 thus cannot be the revered Oxkintok lord. In this way, the presence of the carved bone provides one instance where an object originally belonging to one person was buried with another.[302]

Peter Schmidt (2004: 32-33) suggested that additional bone implements (fig. 6)—long, basically cylindrical items with a small diameter, terminating in a hand carved with the thumb and forefinger extended—found in the tomb resembled scribal tools. As such, the appearance of these objects might mark the profession—artist/scribe—of the occupant (George Bey 2009, pers. comm.), although they may have been used instead as clothing or hair pins (see Chapter 2). The two functions are not necessarily mutually exclusive, since brushes often appear in ornamental contexts. Thus, through the inclusion of two heavily carved Chocholá pots and what might be writing implements, the tomb could link an unnamed artist with the Chocholá style.[303] At the very least, the lord's gift of a personal possession marks an intimate connection between him, the Chocholá style and the buried individual in this case. The confluence of objects in the Oxkintok tomb also strongly ties the ruler to the scribal community over which he presided.

The discovery of sherds in surface collections at Oxkintok provides additional contextual evidence. Not only were Chocholá ceramics carefully, possibly even ritually interred with the dead, they were also used, broken and then thrown away in midden heaps. The three different architectural groups now connected with Chocholá finds also display texts in the monumental record (e.g. non-transportable lintels, stelae, door jambs, etc.) that correspond with **OHL-si-?-TOK**'s reign. While only four vessels can be connected with Oxkintok archaeologically—two from the tomb and two discarded in

[302] The same thing happens, of course, with ceramics and other items.
[303] This person may have been too young to hold the position of master artist suggested by such a set of elite objects.

midden heaps—the fact that their ceramic remains appear in different contexts and in three different areas within the site might suggest that many more were originally located in this center, which has experienced heavy looting over the years. Indeed, the Chocholá moniker that Coe (1973) gave the style resulted from the fact that large numbers of looted examples entered the art market through the modern town of the same name. Chocholá, Mexico, is located close to Oxkintok along one of the major transportation corridors that crisscross the Yucatán Peninsula and it makes perfect sense that looted Oxkintok materials would be introduced into commodity markets via Chocholá (and the smaller town Maxcanú, which is even closer to Oxkintok). At this point, Oxkintok provides the only significant body of provenienced Chocholá material. Furthermore, such archeological data connects the style with architectural precincts naming a single ruler.

As Velázquez Valadés (et al. 2005: 6-7) and colleagues note, the archaeologically provenienced examples differ stylistically from those vessels mentioning the Oxkintok lord. As the Tomb 8 grouping and surface collections demonstrate, Chocholá vessels from Oxkintok participated in at least two different stylistic groups—the calabash-shaped or smooth-walled set and the iconographic category—both of which can be visually differentiated from looted vessels carrying **OHL-si-?-TOK**'s name. Now that the archaeological evidence supports the idea that artists in Oxkintok actually produced ceramics, those looted examples that name the Oxkintok lord can be included in a broader system of manufacture centered at Oxkintok (figs. 17, 18 and possibly 32). While two of these pieces share clear parallels with other known examples associated with the site, the third (fig. 17) presents yet a third stylistic category, one that emphasizes rectilinear cartouches and scenes focused on ballplayers. Thus, at least three scribal styles can be directly connected with Oxkintok, which indicates that there was likely a great deal of overlap across the artistic groups I defined in preceding chapters.[304]

[304] This emphasizes dramatic variability in a style that is both geographically and temporally circumscribed, which in turn points to a scribal community with the ability to make different choices in the exposition of the style. The Oxkintok area community as a whole developed at least three distinct, cohesive Chocholá options, each of which seems to have been considered successful, given the repetition of individual elements across

Chocholá finds have also been connected with other sites in the immediate Oxkintok region. The Calcehtok vessel reported by Spinden (1913: fig. 186) fits neatly into this panorama (fig. 9). Stylistically it connects with the young lord images seen on other ceramics, as I noted in Chapters 4 and 5 and as García Campillo (1992: 198) has indicated as well. The pot, while introducing a seeming variation, corresponds to the level of craft production connected with the tomb finds. Ancient Oxkintok and Calcehtok (originally named after a local hacienda) were very close to one another. Mercer (1975: 45), in discussing the Oxkintok caves, stated that they "lay in the midst of a group of mounds and ruins near the farm of Oxkintok, a league and a half northward from Calcehtok, and one of its dependencies." The proximity (less than 5 miles, according to Mercer) indicates that the Maya probably did not differentiate between the two in antiquity (although if separate, Oxkintok certainly exerted sway over Calcehtok instead of the other way around). López de la Rosa and Velázquez Morlet (1992: 207) have suggested, conversely, that Calcehtok originally functioned as a separate site but that Oxkintok subsumed it by around 850 CE, with activity linking the two occurring earlier. At around the time of Chocholá production, then, Calcehtok was connected to Oxkintok. Such general location-based and stylistic correspondences suggest that the vessel published by Spinden originated in a production center tied to Oxkintok proper and was later deposited in a peripheral area at the site (i.e. Calcehtok).

A Chocholá sherd has also been found at Xkipché, located approximately six miles southwest of Uxmal and probably under Oxkintok's sphere of influence during the time of Chocholá production (fig. 36).[305] The sherd was found in Structure A10, which faces Structure A1. Structure A1, despite Xkipché's ranking as a Class 3 center, is one of the largest palace buildings in the Puuc region (Kowalski 2003: 222). While the

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multiple examples. This in turn implies a fair degree of artistic freedom within certain, set parameters.

[305] As Jeff Karl Kowalski (2003: 221) noted, "Recent mapping and excavations at the medium-sized site of Xkipché, located about 10 km southwest of Uxmal, suggest that Xkipché may have become a dependency of the larger center, although the exact nature of the political relationship remains to be clarified." Prior to Uxmal's meteoric rise to power, Oxkintok almost certainly exerted control over such sites.

fragment from Xkipché gives no indication of the original vessel's form and only contains two partial hieroglyphs, the consistency in their rendition and the use of particular sign types securely connects the associated vessel with the Chocholá style. The leaf nosed bat appears, followed by the anthropomorphized **lu** syllable restricted to Chocholá dedicatory texts (see Chapter 5). In fact, these two glyphs bear a striking resemblance to other sequences found in calabash forms and other vessels displaying scenes (e.g. figs. 40, 42). Indeed, while it does not display the **lu**-bat head, a similar fragment was found in middens at Oxkintok, as I mentioned above (see Velázquez Valadés et al. 2005).

The foregoing evidence strongly suggests that Oxkintok and areas under Oxkintok's control were responsible for producing a number of vessels in the Chocholá style. Not only can a variety of different forms and stylistic types now be associated with the site, Tomb 8 connects the Oxkintok lord, the Oxkintok artistic community and the Chocholá style in one assemblage. The visual and textual analysis conducted by García Campillo (1992) and Velázquez Valadés (et al. 2005) and colleagues supports my own interpretation of the unprovenienced ceramic record. The archaeologically provenienced vessels, when combined with those de-contextualized pieces that name the Oxkintok lord, provide a number of attributes that can be analyzed stylistically and compared with a other looted examples in the effort to attach more of the ceramic corpus to the site, a task I undertake most fully in the next section.

In a surprising turn of events, archaeological evidence for an unusual variation of the style also occurs along the thoroughfare known as the Periférico-Cholul near the modern town of Mérida (fig. 31) (Pool Cab 1997). The Mérida connection is further solidified by one vessel that includes the Tiho place name associated with ancient settlement in the area (fig. 2). Unlike the Periférico-Cholul finds, this specimen does not have any provenience, unfortunately, but the artist's use of certain iconographic features suggests a location of manufacture in the Oxkintok region. The curvilinear quality of line and the great depth in the carving link this piece to other typical examples—like those found in Tomb 8—now connected with Oxkintok. The use of a multilayered space incorporating swirling lines in the background also points to artistic groups at the site.

The background of lightly carved volutes that pushes the deity GI into the foreground clearly differentiates the scenic portion from the blank vessel wall and mimics the crosshatching that covers the entire background in some of the ballplayer images. The ballgame examples name **OHL-si-?-TOK'** and were almost certainly manufactured in artistic communities at the site, as I have already indicated, while the GI vessel incorporates an abbreviated form of the dedicatory formula clearly including the frequently used *u jaay* phrase as well as the *chak ch'ok* title. Thus, in my view, the GI pot retains a specifically Oxkintok way of doing things, based on the style of carving. If this is the case, then potters working at the main center controlling Chocholá production consciously created a vessel that exhibited its Oxkintok-ness. In such a scenario, the vessel was completed at the order of Oxkintok leaders and then sent to Mérida. The visual correspondences detailed above can be differentiated from the Dzibilchaltún ceramic record associated with the Mérida area and provide further evidence supporting the suggestion that the GI vessel was an import (see Andrews IV and Andrews V 1980; Brainerd 1958; Taschek 1994).[306]

The Mérida area find is significant for several reasons, including the fact that it highlights the differences evident in the Chocholá corpus and underscores the idea that multiple centers of production existed. As I have already noted (Chapter 2), ceramics located during salvage excavations near the Periférico-Cholul display a markedly different image tradition than that connected with the looted vessel naming Tiho (compare and contrast figs. 2, 31). The carving is much shallower, for example, and the figural style marks a distinct shift away from a more traditional set of proportions found in the canonical style. The artist's use of framing volutes, most noticeable to the left and right of the central figure, maintains a connection with Chocholá types but there is no doubt that this pot was made at a different production center than that responsible for the creation of the other vessel under consideration (fig. 2). Based on this evidence, I suggest that one (fig. 2) was manufactured in the Oxkintok region specifically for an important

[306] This view will likely undergo revision as more ceramics from the Dzibilchaltún area are published.

individual in the Mérida area. The refined nature of such a gift would have served to impress the Tiho lord and to solidify sociopolitical alliances between the two regions. Presumably (although not necessarily) after the arrival of the GI container, Tiho artists began creating vessels that mimicked or appropriated the style they saw in the gift while also putting a specifically regional stamp on their own production through the use of different figural proportions and imagery.

Returning to the Puuc area, general reports have also connected ceramics in the Chocholá style with places like Peto, Jaina and Ticul. These accounts come out of general ceramic surveys like those conducted by Brainerd (1958) and Vaillant (1927), or larger considerations of Maya art and architecture, like those carried out by Stephens (1843) and Spinden (1913). In some cases (e.g. Brainerd and Vaillant), the method of site identification is not indicated. In at least several instances, however, authors like Stephens (1843: 275) reported that locals showed vessels from ongoing excavations to the investigator/traveler upon his arrival in the area. While such records leave much to be desired, they yield a general sense of location and, as Ardren (1996) suggested, are probably truthful in nature.[307]

One of the Chocholá vessels first published reportedly originated in the Peto area located far to the south east of the Puuc region (Spinden 1913: fig. 185). The Peto vase bears strong similarities to the ceramics manufactured in Oxkintok (fig. 8). It, like the ballplayer ceramics already tied to that site, contains a crosshatched background. The floral frame also surrounds a centrally placed jaguar and is clearly reminiscent of the waterlily cartouches used to frame the bust of the young lord found at Calcehtok, for instance (fig. 9). The circular cartouches provide further regional support for Oxkintok,

[307] I treat this body of data as accurate but would like to insert one qualification. While it is unlikely that either the scholars or their informants 'prevaricated,' simple mistakes or memory lapses might have occurred (see footnote 39, where I discuss the differences between Spinden's [1913: fig. 186] and Vaillant's [1927: fig. 291] accounts with respect to fig. 9). Unfortunately there is no way to 'double check' such information given the loose nature of these early, private excavations, instituted long before the advent of INAH and the concurrent development of rigorous methods for recording depositional data.

as I suggest when discussing context from a hieroglyphic perspective below. Thus, it seems that **OHL-si-?-TOK'** or another Puuc lord from the area also sent vessels in a more southeasterly direction.

The pot from Ticul, however, seems to incorporate a slightly different figural style (fig. 7). Stephens (1843: 274-276) first saw this pot right after it had been unearthed. Unfortunately, he did not provide more specific information regarding its deposition, although it so impressed him that he conducted further excavations in the fruitless attempt to find similar pieces (see Chapter 2). The slouched shoulders and elongated cranium of the young lord implies an alternate, non-Oxkintok locus of manufacture, although the visual parallels—the curvilinear cartouche, the predominant use of watery and waterlily imagery, the relationship between image and vessel wall, etc.—suggest a strongly related system of production. The actual pot is not available for inspection, unfortunately, and it is not clear whether the differences in figural proportions result from Stephen's drawing of the vessel or whether they instead indicate either a different artist working within a larger school or a different scribal tradition altogether. If the drawing replicates the image faithfully, then the differences in the way the artist chose to carve the young lord would imply a different center of production that, while distinct, was still strongly aligned with a production site in the Oxkintok region. This interpretation, while based on highly suppositional evidence, is further supported by the fact that the vessel supposedly came from Ticul, a modern town connected with ancient ruins in the Puuc region not so distant from Oxkintok. It is even conceivable that, at its most powerful, Oxkintok exerted control (either directly or through a system of alliances) over this region. The visual evidence implies that the Ticul-area site functioned either as a satellite center linked to Oxkintok or that the leaders at this location wanted to obtain vessels mimicking the elite goods owned by Oxkintok lords in an effort to develop their own sense of status and identity.

The ceramics supposedly found at Jaina point to another subdivision within the Chocholá category. In Coe's (1973: cat. 53) seminal definition of the style, he connected one of the pots he illustrated with Jaina instead of the Chocholá/Maxcanú area of origin

he gave for most of the other ceramics.[308] Instead of the curvilinear forms connected with so many pots in the canonical style, the Jaina example emphasizes a rectilinear frame, much as in the ballplayer scenes, although the artist still chose to incorporate typical figural proportions and deep carving. In contrast to ballplayers, busts of young lords and other standard imagery, this scene shows two characters placed in front of a large blank area. The vessel clearly participates within the larger Chocholá group based on the depth of carving and the fact that scribe separated the entire scene from both the hieroglyphic text and the vessel wall. This pot cannot be connected with scribal practices originating in the Oxkintok area, based on strong visual disparities and textual differences (as I discuss in the following section). The alternate glyphic sequences and scene types are apparently directly linked with a particular artistic group located further to the west, as the appearance of three ceramics using these techniques would suggest (figs. 15, 48). The Jaina ceramic record also includes a number of imports, especially from the lower Usumacinta and the Petén (Dorie Reents-Budet 2010, pers. comm.), which may explain some of the visual differences seen in presumable Jaina manifestations of the Chocholá style.

Spinden (1913: fig.187) connected a vessel portraying a variation of the square cartouche/seated lord trope with the Jaina area (fig. 10). This pot is almost as different from the one illustrated by Coe as the Coe vessel is from Oxkintok examples. It even breaks the general Chocholá rule that the image should be clearly differentiated from the vessel wall. In this case, part of the image frame turns into a band that circles the rim. Indeed, this vessel seems to mimic certain aspects of the Chocholá style rather than being

[308] This piece, like so many others in the corpus, is looted. The private collector who originally owned it took a scholarly approach to collecting artifacts, however, and was concerned with provenience. He is now dead and thus cannot be interviewed further. When he loaned the vessel for the Grolier Club exihibition, however, he reported to Coe (2009, pers. comm.) that it came out of Jaina. The Jaina connection remains somewhat problematic, however. In the 1960s and 70s many collectors and dealers indiscriminately connected objects with island because it was a well-known source of Maya figurines (David Stuart 2009, pers. comm.). In any case, the stylistic evidence I present indicates that a subsidiary manufacture center linked with, yet separate from Oxkintok, produced such ceramics.

an integral member. As with the Tiho pieces, diversity in appearance may indicate a regional effort to appropriate an elite commodity while also developing a localized visual type. If this is the case, the elaborate conference scene set within a rectilinear frame was probably developed in the Jaina area in dialogue with the Oxkintok manifestation of the style and subsequently adopted by satellite centers in that region.[309]

At least one other looted pot almost exactly replicates the Jaina-area depiction of a single, seated lord (see Anton 1978: fig. 283). The striking similarity in appearance suggests that both were made at the same location. A looted vessel more clearly in the Chocholá style (fig. 113) also shares correspondences with this group. The artist in question rendered the lord's face using the same quality of line (notice the double outline around the lips, for instance) and the waterlily in the headdress takes on a similar, almost geometric appearance (see the incorporation of the blossom as part of the belt in the other vessels). The level of equivalence implies closely related artistic groups and even seems to indicate that the craftsmen who created the Chocholá-esque images took artistic liberties. They either did not value or could not produce the more detailed cartouche frame so common to the style or, finally, they consciously chose not to as a way of asserting a separate site or region-specific identity.

An odd variation of the style was also apparently deposited at Uxmal (fig. 12). Despite its oddities, the vessel illustrated by Vaillant (1927: fig. 310) finds a strong visual parallel in another piece (fig. 40) clearly linked with the canonical manifestation of the style. The unusual shape—both vessels incorporate pedestal feet—forms one small

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[309] As such comments indicate I do see a difference in the quality of the two ceramics. One exhibits a lifelike use of space, body proportions, etc., while the style of the other tends towards a stocky figural type created through a rougher, thicker use of line. The second image also lacks the amount of detail seen in the first. While we, as scholars, should be wary of connecting such traits automatically with relative value, the contrast between the two pieces, despite their supposed proximity to one another, seems to imply the existence of two artists, one a highly skilled practitioner and the other who was perhaps slightly less adept. Alternately, or even at the same time, the stylistic difference seems to indicate that multiple artists were creating their own stylistic identity while also working under a wider set of loose rules governing a specific, regionalized expression of aesthetics.

variation on the canonical style. In the looted example (fig. 40), the hieroglyphic text and the secure placement of the young lord's bust in a cartouche clearly express a Chocholá-based approach to ceramic production (see Chapter 3). Like the obvious Chocholá example, the piece (fig. 12) illustrated by Vaillant (1927: fig. 310) takes the same shape and a cartouche also frames the young lord carved into the ceramic ground. In this case, while the cartouche runs into a band circling the rim in a very un-Chocholá-like fashion, the overarching similarities between the two vessels suggest that the second piece was created in the same area and that it too should be included within the corpus.[310] The fact that this container was found at Uxmal expands our understanding of the Chocholá style as a whole. Chocholá vessels seem to have been created within a very short time period. The archaeological evidence already presented and the repeated connection with the Oxkintok lord **OHL-si-?-TOK'** provides evidence that these pots were made under the auspices of one or, at the most two to three generations of rulers.[311] They also seem to have been produced much earlier than Uxmal's florescence and can be restricted to the Late Classic, c. 700-800 or, possibly even 700-750 CE.

While Uxmal is best known for its impressive Terminal/Post Classic architectural forms, significant populations inhabited the area continuously beginning in the Early Classic at the latest (INAH 2009). Less than twenty miles separate Uxmal and Oxkintok. Furthermore, the Uxmal-Nohpat-Kabah axis of control does not fully develop until after Oxkintok's supremacy—and its material expression in the Chocholá style—has passed. Thus, regional hierarchies privileged Oxkintok in the Late Classic and Uxmal, while still a significant center at this time, probably fell under the Oxkintok sphere of influence (see García Campillo 1992: 185). In this case, the ceramic vessel in question could indicate a production site in the Uxmal region contemporary with, and linked to, the major area of manufacture located in and around Oxkintok. The use of blocky pseudoglyphs and the

[310] The artist responsible for the looted vessel (fig. 40) certainly did not also create this piece (fig. 12), as the pseudo text, among other things, indicates.
[311] Likewise, one, two or at the most three generations of artists were probably responsible for this ceramic style given its temporal restriction to fifty to one hundred years (Reents-Budet 2009, pers. comm.).

odd relationship between image and vessel wall seems to suggest a secondary location of production while also indicating a transition away from the canonical stylistic group towards more standard slateware decoration types. Such formal variation may also have chronological implications. As Robert Rands (1974) has shown in his analysis Palenque pottery, even the most minor shift in vessel shape and rim orientation can be connected with chronological changes, although individual variations in form are not necessarily indicative of temporal distinction. The strong visual association between the Vaillant example and Terminal Classic slatewares may thus indicate a slightly later development within the Chocholá style.

Two additional vessels were apparently found during excavations at Dzibilchaltún but further information cannot be given until the actual ceramics have been located and securely placed within the Chocholá style.[312] They may either mark another locus of manufacture or they might indicate a far-flung political connection. Unfortunately, without the ability to analyze the imagery displayed by the ceramics in question, further categorization is impossible. Xcalumkin artists also seem to have made a few vessels in the Chocholá style or to have received such pots from the Oxkintok region although these archaeologically provenienced examples have yet to be published (Dominique Michelet 2007, pers. comm.).

### *Contextualizing the Chocholá Dedicatory Formula*

Mayanists have long recognized that the northern manifestation of Maya culture exhibits certain key differences from that found in the southern lowlands (e.g. Morley

[312] Unfortunately, drawings or pictures of these ceramics seem to have been misplaced; the report in which they are published simply gives a brief description of the vessel type and compares the finds iconographically with pots illustrated by Brainerd (1958: fig. 48k) while illustrations for this and other entries are missing (Simmons 1978-1980: 37). The vessel for which Simmons referred to Brainerd exhibits Chocholá characteristics but the isolated carving on the vessel wall appears as large, non-calendrical glyphs instead of image-based scenes. Simmons discusses imagery in the Dzibilchaltún examples, however.

1938, Proskouriakoff 1950). These differences often appear in stylistic expression and reside in architectural construction techniques and hieroglyphic and iconographic patterning. Early scholars noted the marked visual disparity between northern and southern architectural types, for instance, combined with what seemed to be chronological difference. Such apparent differences (in conjunction with the perceived lack of northern hieroglyphic data before the Late Classic) led to hypotheses concerning the migration of people from south to north in conjunction with colonization efforts, while an influx of foreigners from central Mexico was used to explain some of the non-Petén traits found at Chichen Itza and other sites (e.g. Brainerd 1958: 60-62, 93-95; Morley 1938). While such temporal and cultural changes are no longer supported by the data at hand, early reports highlight the visual distinction commonly recognized between northern and southern expressions of material culture. More recently, from an epigraphic perspective scholars have found that northern examples differ from southern ones in the manner of writing dates, the appearance of specific glyphic forms, and a concentration on syllables at the expense of logographs, all of which point to an alternate approach to writing within the larger Maya system (see Graña Behrens 2002).

In the effort to reach a greater level of specificity by anchoring the style in the north both archaeologically and stylistically, I concentrate particularly on the hieroglyphic record from three sites: Dzibilchaltún, Oxkintok and Xcalumkin. My examination of the archaeological data strongly suggests that Oxkintok acted as a primary center of production. Xcalumkin has also been suggested as a site of manufacture (Grube 1990: 327-328). Furthermore, scholars have compared Dzibilchaltún and Oxkintok ceramics in the past and have found that the two groups share similarities (see Varela Torrecilla 1990: 120). Since only general accounts connect a few vessels with Dzibilchaltún, the site should share few core stylistic similarities with most of the ceramics in the current corpus. Thus, by selecting these sites in particular, my investigation allows me to argue that Chocholá rim bands indicate a northern locus of production while also examining regional variation. Such an approach further helps me

categorically include or exclude these and other locations as probable areas of manufacture, which has important implications regarding distribution.

Many different aspects of the Chocholá dedicatory formula further solidify the link between the style and the northern lowlands. Some of these elements are so restricted in their use that they can be further connected with particular sites. I begin by conducting a broader stylistic investigation into the parallels shared by the appearance of the hieroglyphic sequences found in the ceramic corpus and at these three different sites. I then consider particular signs that occur repeatedly on Chocholá vessels; some of these terms also seem to have a restricted regional distribution while others exhibit much broader use patterns. Not only do I present certain glyphic forms as evidence for particular, site-based connections, I also indicate instances where a specifically northern approach to writing dictated word choice in opposition to southern styles.[313]

Maya artists frequently chose to picture a lord standing on top of or underneath an *ajaw* calendrical unit. This pattern appears throughout the Maya area and, in the north, can be seen on Dzibilchaltún and Sayil stelae, for instance (indeed, it is a particularly popular image composition at Sayil) (Graña Behrens 2002: Tafel 51, 76-78, 138). Following Stuart (1996: 166-167), Graña Behrens (2002: 245-246) suggested that the lord thus came to be associated with or epitomized the concepts of time and order. Such imagery complemented the correspondence between the word for lord—*ajaw*—and the calendrical sign of the same name. Furthermore, in the north, Graña Behrens (2002: 246, 260) noted the Yucatecan method of k'atun counting demonstrated by the appearance of a single, numbered *ajaw* sign and indicated that this approach was especially popular in the Late Classic. He further limited the northern use of this trope to the area between Etzna and Oxkintok. Significantly, Chocholá scribes occasionally combined the single *ajaw* calendrical sign with the portrait busts of young lords so popular in the corpus as a whole.

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[313] In my consideration of monumental inscriptions and iconography, I have tried to limit my investigation to eighth and ninth century monuments unless otherwise stated so that the comparison is as temporally close to the period of Chocholá production as is possible given the uncertainties regarding both the exact dating of the Chocholá corpus and of certain northern monuments (see Graña Behrens [2002] for the dating of monuments containing calendrical information)

They placed the heads of such youthful individuals in what must be numbered *ajaw* signs referring to temporal moments. A vessel (fig. 16) that follows this pattern, according to Graña Behrens' (2002: Tafel 194, Appendix F) assessment, dates to 9.17.0.0.0 (771 CE), well within the 700-800 CE range proposed for the Chocholá style. The pattern also fits a picture of northern manufacture, where such manifestations are restricted to the Puuc region and bounded at the north by Oxkintok.

Turning to direct comparisons between the Chocholá style dedicatory formulae and writing found at specific sites, in the rather reduced written record at Dzibilchaltún a thicker manner of glyphic rendition exists. In the few Classic era texts available for the site, head variants are not favored and large rectangular frames clearly separate each block from the next, as in the Structure 96 lintel (see Coggins 1983). A preference for geometric prefixes followed by what seems to be a more curvilinear use of line in the main sign also apparently occurs in the eroded Structure 96 texts. The contrast evident in the emphatic combination of geometric and calligraphically rendered signs does not seem to have any corollary in the Chocholá corpus. A few ceramics do exhibit some similarities—the Stylized Calabash Sub-style vessel from the Dzibilchaltún museum (fig. 51), for instance, demonstrates a slightly more geometric approach to certain syllables, but the eroded state of the Dzibilchaltún texts makes a clear comparison difficult.[314] A few other cases seem to respond to similar artistic methods. The use of a vertically oriented bar following the main image in one piece (fig. 73), for instance, mimics the use of a similar bar following the first (non-calendrical) sign in the Dzibilchaltún Structure 96 text and the forceful use of raised bars to separate glyphic blocks also occurs elsewhere in the Chocholá corpus (e.g. fig. 111).

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[314] While the vessel can now be found on permanent display in the Dzibilchaltún museum, its current setting does not necessarily indicate the source of manufacture or even the area of deposition. The Dzibilchaltún museum collections contain pieces found not only at the site but also originating in other locations within the larger northern Maya region (Sylviane Boucher 2007, pers. comm.). While it might be tempting to see the gourd-shaped pot in question as possibly one of the missing vessels from the Dzibilchaltún report, this cannot be the case because Simmons (1987-1980: 37) clearly mentions pictorial imagery.

The Chocholá images do not seem to share any overt similarities with the Stela 9 text from Dzibilchaltún (see Graña Behrens 2002: Tafel 50), aside from a pronounced angularity and filling of the glyphic blocks. Noticeably, what seems to be the **lu**-bat expression on Stela 9 has been written in a single glyphic block, while Chocholá artists typically chose to carefully separate the leaf-nosed bat head and the **lu** syllable.[315] Parallels between Chocholá texts and Stela 19 from Dzibilchaltún are even more indefinite (see Grube, Lacadena and Martin 2003: II-34), aside from the use of the common *kalomte'* title in both cases. Without a larger base for comparison, it is unclear whether the correspondences mentioned above are meaningful (i.e. consistent) or accidental in nature.

In contrast to Dzibilchaltún, a much larger group of hieroglyphs can be found at Xcalumkin. This body of evidence demonstrates the existence of a cohesive style not only affecting writing at the site but also in the region surrounding it. The use of a double outline (or a prominently raised edge demarcating the major forms) combined with a calligraphic (i.e. slanted curvilinear) approach marks a distinctive monumental style at the site and can be seen in almost all examples (particularly representative texts can be found on the structures in the Hieroglyphic Group; see Pollock 1980: figs. 740-752). Even when the scribe did not emphasize the distinctive double outline (as in the Initial Series Building; see Pollock 1980: fig. 715), it still appears with enough frequency to enable a Xcalumkin identification. In the complete absence of this particular stylistic approach, the Xcalumkin scribe could choose, depending on formal constraints, to render the hieroglyphic sequences in a more pronounced calligraphic manner. Peter Mathews (in conversation with Grube, Stuart and other epigraphers [David Stuart 2009, pers. comm.]) convincingly connected an incised vessel with Xcalumkin based on the recurrent use of a particular personal name (fig. 57).[316] In this case, each lightly carved hieroglyph

[315] Stela 9 displays a date of 840, just over 100 years after that found on the Structure 96 lintel (Graña Behrens 2002: Appendix F).
[316] Grube (1990: 327-328) initially identified this as a Chocholá piece but such an identification is no longer valid given the way that the hieroglyphic texts frame the imagery and the extensive use of incising instead of layered carving.

slants up and to the right slightly, a pattern that is particularly noticeable in cases where the **lu** syllable is included.

No Chocholá vessel exhibits either the incised calligraphic approach seen in the Xcalumkin vessel identified by Grube or the use of the prominent double outline seen in many of the monumental inscriptions at the site. In fact, only a couple of ceramics can be tentatively connected with Xcalumkin based on stylistic considerations. One (fig. 114) might exhibit a similar curvilinear method of glyphic rendition despite the use of relief carving. Another Chocholá vessel (fig. 115) introduces sequences that demonstrate an unusual internal relationship between the constituent components of each block. Simply consider, for example, the way *u jaay* is written on the Chocholá piece—the **yi** suffix fills the lower portion of the glyphic block instead of appearing only under the **ja** syllable as is more common. This unusual approach to syllabic arrangement can also be seen in the last three glyphs in the second column of the Chocholá vertical text.[317] While a similarly unusual approach to combining syllabic forms occurs in the Xcalumkin incised ware, it does not seem to be a typical scribal style at Xcalumkin since the monumental texts do not exhibit the same kind of variation.

The way certain signs appear can also provide important information regarding the location of creation. The stylistic appearance of the full-figured bird, regardless of whether it is used syllabically—as in Chocholá examples—or logographically—as in the

[317] As such an analysis and a glance at the vessel itself indicates, it is not a typical Chocholá piece—it contains no imagery, an atypical combination of vertical and rim sequences and also, instead of the standard calabash striations, incorporates three horizontal bands molded into the vessel wall (fig. 115). It has been suggested that these bands refer to the bound column architectural form specific to the Puuc region. Despite the distinctive visual effect this pot has, it can be included within the larger Chocholá group due to the inclusion of terms repetitively used in the Chocholá corpus—the *ajaw*-based Initial Sign occurs, for instance, as do the standard *yich*/*hich* phrase, the reference to carving, the *chak ch'ok* moniker and, finally, the title, specific to Oxkintok, that includes the number seven (see García Campillo 1992: 195). The use of this title would seem to imply that an Oxkintok lord was responsible for commissioning the manufacture of this piece. While this is certainly possible (and if true would mark the parallels identified above as coincidental), we only need remember that Tiho is mentioned on a vessel probably made at Oxkintok to see that ceramics are commonly, *but not always* produced at the places they name.

name of the famous Bird Jaguar from Yaxchilan—can still be used as a way of indicating regional manufacture. Clear renditions of the full bird in its logographic form can be seen at Xcalumkin atop the east inner doorway in the Middle Building of the Hieroglyphic Group (see Pollock 1980: fig. 743). This particular bird takes a very distinctive appearance. The beak is elongated and the scribe has, in this case, chosen to emphasize the curvature in the line of the breast where it comes up to meet the neck and head. In marked contrast, most Chocholá artists chose to render the bird as one long strip with very little differentiation made between the different parts of the body. Only two Chocholá examples incorporate a bird with a particularly elongated beak and a clearly defined transition between body and head (see fig. 43; the other vessel appears in photographs housed at Dumbarton Oaks and has an even more prounounded curvature between neck and body). Thus, based on a close stylistic analysis that compares manners of glyphic rendition, most of the Chocholá vessels that include the full figured bird cannot be connected with Xcalumkin although two examples are clearly reminiscent of a more Xcalumkin way of doing things. Interestingly, not only do we see the Stylized Calabash form in this connection, but also one of the young lord busts so common in Chocholá examples connected with Oxkintok. Furthermore, the use of the full-figured bird as a syllable—**k'i**—is unique to these vessels even though it compares visually with the logographic word for bird used by the Xcalumkin Maya.

When considering inscriptions from Oxkintok, conversely, the broader stylistic analysis conducted thus far provides a host of attributes also manifested in Chocholá inscriptions. While circular cartouches occur in other locations in both the northern and southern lowlands (what appears to be a circular cartouche framing a rodent head—possibly for *ch'ok*—appears on the back of Stela 1 from Jaina, for example),[318] they exhibit a revealing degree of regularity at Oxkintok. They are most obvious in the

[318] While Jaina is not the only other site to contain circular cartouched, non-calendrical glyphs, it is significant that scribes from another site where Chocholá ceramics have supposedly been found chose to utilize the circular glyphic form albeit sparingly; see my comments at the end of this chapter for a further discussion of Jaina and Oxkintok in relation to Chocholá ceramics.

Structure 3C10 Lintels (see Pollock 1980: figs. 536-537) where they account for between 15 and 20 (!) individual glyphs, but can also be found at Xburrotunich, a satellite center.[319] Four more non-calendrical circular cartouches were carved on a column from an unidentified location within Oxkintok, at least two were carved into lintels in the Xkupaloma Building from the north end of the Ridge Group and stylized glyphs taking the same form appear on round stone balls from the Structure 3C6 area (see Carnegie Institute of Washington Collection of Maya Archaeological Photographs: 58-34-20/72713, 58-34-20/72123 and 58-34-20/72073).

As such examples indicate, in the northern region (specifically western Yucatán and northern Campeche), Oxkintok area scribes used the circular cartouche form much more frequently than scribes in other locations.[320] Furthermore, Oxkintok scribes chose between two different ways of incorporating the circular cartouche. They placed glyphs within a circular depression, for example, or they incised the glyphs into a circular or ovoid ground yet separated from it by a deeply carved line running around the cartouche (compare and contrast Pollock 1980: figs 537a, b, for instance). These two different approaches parallel those found in Chocholá ceramics, where the circular frame can take the form of a double outline or can simply appear as a basically ovoid depression in which the word has been carved (see figs. 19-23). The circular cartouches found on a lintel or jamb (exact original location unclear) from the same building at Oxkintok even force the glyphs to follow the shape of the circular frame so that they curve inward at the corners, just as the syllabic forms conform to the circular shape in Chocholá cases (see

[319] I would like to thank David Stuart (2008, pers. comm.) for showing me an image of a Xburrotunich stela with seven glyphs in circular cartouches on the side to the left of the central, three-dimensionally carved figure.

[320] As I have already mentioned, Oxkintok and Jaina are certainly not the only locations where hieroglyphs in circular cartouches appear; simply consider, for example, Stela 1 from Dzibilnocac (see Graña Behrens 2002: Tafel 55), a jade naming a Calakmul lord found under Chichen Itza's Castillo stairway (see Grube, Lacadena and Martin 2003: II-8), Ek' Balam Miscellaneous Text 7 (see Grube, Lacadena and Martin 2003: II-25), Dos Pilas Stela 9 (see Martin 2009: 76) and Sayil Stela 3 (see Graña Behrens 2002: Tafel 137) to name a few.

Pollock 1980: fig. 539).[321] The comparison is not exact, however, given that the Chocholá use of the double cartouche still contains deeply carved glyph blocks (although the Peto example seems to exhibit more of an incised line). Circular cartouches were also commonly carved into stelae in and immediately around Oxkintok, apparently. Nothing more can be said about the style in which they were created at Oxkintok, unfortunately, given the high level of erosion these monuments have been subjected to through the years (see Stelae 19, 21; Pollock 1980: figs. 546c, 547). The Xburrotunich stela, in contrast, incorporates still-visible detail incised into each deeply carved circular frame. Another sculpture from Oxkintok (Miscellaneous Monument M5) also seems to display such circular cartouches (see Pollock 1980: fig. 576a).[322]

In addition to similarities shared between individual Chocholá and Oxkintok glyphs, a larger pattern of connecting and ordering words in text strings at the site also appears in the ceramic evidence. As I have already indicated, Chocholá texts can take a reversed reading order, either within the individual glyph block or in the string as a whole. While such a re-orientation of the glyphic string occurs in the Maya area, it does so only rarely, as MacLeod and Reents-Budet (1994: 139) note. Furthermore, according to García Campillo (1992: 188), this stylistic trait can be specifically associated with Oxkintok (although correct reading order is more typical).[323] As at Oxkintok, the majority of Chocholá ceramics do display a more normal reading order, but the reversals occur with a higher frequency than in examples from other regions, especially those found in the south.

A particular approach to carving also creates a visual parallel between several Chocholá ceramics and the Oxkintok area. A monument from the Southwest Group at X'Castillo (a site so close to Oxkintok that it likely acted as an outlying group anciently) exhibits a particular quality of carving mimicking that found on many vessels in the

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[321] This is also true of the Xburrotunich example.
[322] Pollock recorded Miscellaneous Monument M5's provenience as Maxcanú. Maxcanú is within fifteen minutes walking distance from the Oxkintok site center, however, and ancient occupation associated with the site certainly underlies the modern town.
[323] Unusual glyphic order can be seen in the lintel from Room 5, Structure 3C10, for example (see Pollock 1980: fig. 538).

corpus. Instead of harsh borders, for instance, the edge of each glyph has been slightly rounded so that the carving takes on a faintly molded appearance, as if the material was soft and pliable when the glyph was originally created (see Pollock 1980: fig. 556). This same manner of carving can also be seen in many of the ceramics under consideration (simply consider, for instance, figs. 64, 83, 103). While I discuss standard sign usage next, I would like to mention that the X'Castillo inscription also includes a particular form of the **u** syllable that is favored in the Chocholá group.[324]

Visual similarities of a larger nature thus clearly indicate that the same scribal concerns affected glyphic production at Oxkintok and its environs and in the Chocholá wares. Very few examples provide clear areas of convergence between the Xcalumkin and Dzibilchaltún body of data, however, which implies that these centers did not produce the style in great numbers. I would now like to turn to a discussion of preferred glyphic forms. Individual artists certainly would be expected to demonstrate repetitive patterns in selecting certain syllables. The same can be said for individual sites as well. While the argument could be made that continuity in sign usage might become convoluted over time, the archaeological data and the strong visual coherence of the core group suggests that such vessels would have been made by one or two (three at the most) generations of potters. The temporal restriction makes it more likely that the selective use of particular forms would remain consistent throughout the period of production.

In addition to the manner of rendering certain, much used syllables, the selection of particular words also solidifies an Oxkintok regional connection at the expense of Xcalumkin or Dzibilchaltún links. An unusual title occurs at the end of the dedicatory formula in one pot (fig. 52). This same glyphic collocation can be found carved on Step Number 2 (block A2) from the Hieroglyphic Stairway at Oxkintok, a stairway that also names an important ruler at Oxkintok—**OHL-si-?-TOK'** (see Carnegie Institute of Washington Collection of Maya Archaeological Photographs: 58-34-20/72130). Even though the particular glyphic combination seen here and in Step 2 is absent elsewhere in

[324] This text may also name the Oxkintok lord, although the state of erosion makes such a reading far from secure.

the ceramic corpus, a number of Chocholá pots can now be connected with Oxkintok based on the attributes they share with the vessel mentioned here (see my discussion of the dedicatory formulae in Chapter 5).

Frequently, the link between Oxkintok and the Chocholá style is even more direct. One of the major breakthroughs in finding the association between the two came with García Campillo's (1992: 186-188) aforementioned recognition that a person named at Oxkintok also appeared on two Chocholá style ceramics (figs. 17, 18).[325] While a full reading of this individual's name remains unclear, García Campillo (1992: 188) suggested **wa-la-si** for *Walas*. Boot (1997a: 1) more correctly read the glyphic combination as **OHL-si-?-TOK'**. Additionally, García Campillo (1992: 198-199), in communication with Grube, identified the **SAK-TE'-NAL**/*sakunal* title (figs. 18, 109) as a toponym for, or a reference to, a "concrete place" ("lugar concreto") at (associated with) Oxkintok. This title occurs on a carved tablet found in the southwest entrance to Structure 3C7, now renamed Structure CA7 (see Pollock 1980: fig. 523b). Notably, one Chocholá vessel (fig. 39) names another individual and not **OHL-si-?-TOK'** in conjunction with the *sakunal* title.

Many other people are named in the Chocholá corpus. Several examples (e.g. fig. 83) incorporate a glyph block representing the *kalomte'* title in its fullest expression (here somewhat truncated). This term fills a nominal role; not only does it occur in the nominal section of the dedicatory formula when it is included but several ceramics also incorporate scene captions containing this syllabic pairing, thus supporting the idea that it functions as some kind of title. The hieroglyphs surrounding this collocation in the ceramic examples are not the same in all cases. An Ixik (female) head precedes the collocation, which is followed by *kalomte'* and the *sakunal* title in one piece (fig. 39). In another (fig. 83), however, the scribe prefaced the *kalomte'* combination with **u-?-ba** (it is the image of) and ended the text string with the typical *bakab* reference. While these two examples contain similar glyphic combinations, they represent an oft-used title

[325] **OHL-si-?-TOK'** is named on the Structure 2B11 Hieroglyphic Stair, for instance (see García Campillo 1992: 188; Pollock 1980: fig. 498, 499a).

(applied to a female personage in one case and a man in the other) instead of naming the same person. Significantly, the *kalomte'* title also occurs repeatedly at Oxkintok (on Stucco Fragment III, Hieroglyphic Step I and Lintel 8 from Structure CA7) and much less frequently at Xcalumkin or other sites (see García Campillo and Lacadena 1987: 96). According to García Campillo and Lacadena (1987: 96), this title often appears in the south (at sites like Tikal, Naranjo and Copán) but only at Oxkintok and Dzibilchaltún in the northern region. Outside the Puuc area, Ek' Balam and Coba can be added to this list of northern sites (David Stuart 2009, pers. comm.). García Campillo and Lacadena interpret the pattern of *kalomte'* usage as a northern importation of the title marking continued north-south interaction dating to the very beginning of the Late Classic (coeval with the advent of the Chocholá style; García Campillo and Lacadena 1987: 96).

Initially, implied connections were made between other titles—like the *chak ch'ok'* term—and Xcalumkin by Grube (1990: 325). Xcalumkin was well known while other sites like Oxkintok were relatively underrepresented at this early date. Now, however, it is clear that such titles were common in the north and cannot be connected solely with Xcalumkin. The *chak ch'ok'* title, for instance, is found on one of the columns to Room 4, Structure 3C10 at Oxkintok (see Pollock 1980: fig. 536). Furthermore, the *bakab* title, ubiquitous in the Chocholá record, is also a traditional nominal phrase used throughout the Maya area and appearing in a particularly northern variant in inscriptions at sites like Oxkintok and Xcalumkin (and probably at Dzibilchaltún as well, although the hieroglyphic record is much reduced for that site; García Campillo and Lacadena 1987: 94). Again, the stylistic differences in syllabic arrangement point to an Oxkintok connection rather than a Xcalumkin point of origin for most Chocholá vessels. The vast majority of the ceramic corpus contains either the **ba-ka-ba** or the **ba-ka-KAB** collocation, which might reflect a northern (or even site specific) variation parallel to the occasional southern use of the rodent head to open the phrase (see García Campillo and Lacadena 1987: 94). The traditional **ba-ka-ba** form is the standard manner of writing *bakab* and is found at Oxkintok and Xcalumkin.

The *sajal* title, another frequently employed collocation functions in a manner similar to *bakab* stylistically. While it can be found on ceramics and at sites throughout the Maya region, scribes could choose to develop a distinctive manner of carving (or painting) the sign. The Chocholá corpus, for instance, displays an unusual visual reanalysis of the **sa** syllable in many cases (see Chapter 5), while Xcalumkin scribes repeatedly included a particular variant of the *sajal* collocation that looks dramatically different from that found in Chocholá pieces. The contrast is particularly evident when the door jambs of the South Building in the Hieroglyphic group at Xcalumkin (see Pollock 1980: fig. 748) are compared with the *sajal* glyph in a Chocholá example (fig. 108); here the rounded curves and the full form of the **sa** syllable at Xcalumkin differ from the scribal tradition connected with the more vertically oriented, geometric rendition of a partial **sa** syllable in the Chocholá corpus. The repeated use of the **la** sign as a sub-fix for both the **sa** and **ja** syllables at Xcalumkin further solidifies such visual difference given that all versions of the Chocholá variation of the title incorporate the **la** sign as a sub-fix only for the **ja** syllable while the **sa** syllable prefixes the entire glyphic block.

There are several patterns that cannot be linked with regional specificity but which clearly distinguish the Chocholá style from other ceramic traditions. Certain hieroglyphic elements seem to be further restricted to the Chocholá style itself, for example. An anthropomorphized **lu** syllable appears on many vessels, for instance, while other animated **lu** forms appear only with extreme rarity elsewhere in the Maya world.[326] As such, the **lu** syllable clearly creates a specifically Chocholá pattern within larger hieroglyphic trends in the Puuc region.

The *Ajaw* logograph as a superfix attached to the main introductory sign is another unusual inclusion. Instead of marking regional specificity, it may function as an archaic reference and, as such, recall other, earlier ways of writing (David Stuart 2004, pers. comm.). Such glyphic elaboration may indicate an attempt to recall older traditions as a way of asserting the sense of a long-lasting, continuous, *in situ* heritage as well as conferring prestige on the style more generally.

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[326] See Chapter 5, especially footnote 272.

*Contextualizing Image Style and Artistic Practices:*
*Stylistic Correspondences*

Word form and selection are not the only elements that respond strongly to the social environment responsible for ceramic production; iconography and techniques of manufacture also display regional as well as site-specific variation. As with the hieroglyphic texts just mentioned, scholars have long recognized differences in image tropes and appearance connected with a north versus south paradigm. While Maya versus 'Mexican' period dichotomies (e.g. Morley 1938) have not stood the test of time, the visual distinctions that exemplify northern as opposed to southern approaches still exist and further analysis results in a more geographically nuanced understanding of stylistic usage among the Maya. Palenque contrasts visually with Yaxchilan, for instance, just as Oxkintok produced objects in a style that differs greatly from that found in either of the other two aforementioned locations.

Artistic styles are often harder to codify than the appearance of dedicatory formulae given the wide range of variables found in most pictorial representations. When the analyst focuses on a body of images from an individual site, however, certain patterns emerge. The stylistic thesis as a whole is, in fact, based on the core idea that different groups (even culturally related groups) will, in dialogue with their neighbors, choose to develop their own particular way of doing things (e.g. building pig traps, creating art objects, making textiles, etc.), often as a way of demonstrating a particular sense of identity (see Chapter 3). The way ancient Maya artists chose to arrange their compositions also reflects site-specific preferences. As a corollary to the hieroglyphic corpus where artists chose to use particular titles (or forms) over others based on the location of manufacture, a predilection for certain types of regalia and the emphasis placed on those accoutrements could exhibit regional distribution. Furthermore, as Panofsky (1955b: 56) suggested years ago, figural proportions can be particularly sensitive indications of stylistic identity. These are but a few of the attributes that have

the potential to display site or area specific variations.[327] Once a general stylistic understanding has been developed for each location, the ceramic corpus can be compared with the monumental record in the effort to identify certain diagnostic similarities. Rarely does a particular ceramic grouping express style in a monolithic fashion, however, and the Chocholá pieces certainly exhibit dramatic variation that, as suggested earlier, probably results from various centers of production and small-scale temporal changes given their chronologically restricted manufacture.

Hypotheses regarding the existence of subsidiary production sites further complicates the situation. When a ceramic style connected with a particular area is mimicked or appropriated and adapted to suit the needs of another region, the stylistic attributes that allowed location of manufacture to be suggested in the first instance become diffused in the second. The visual relationship between two such ceramic groupings indicates their connection while at the same time marking their difference; again proportionality, the arrangement of figures in space and relative use of detail can clearly reflect differences in core versus peripheral production approaches while still resulting in similar looking vessels. This process of stylistic dissemination makes an area of production harder to identify in the second case because of the potters' desire to utilize certain key diagnostic features that were otherwise not particularly popular in his/her

[327] Repeated use of a particular medium (like the thin stone slabs so common at Palenque) is often dictated by available resources and also can provide further evidence of regional variation at a stylistic level. I compare and contrast ceramic and monumental art styles in order to connect specific Chocholá vessels with particular sites (for which stelae, lintels, etc. provide the vast majority of provenienced, high-status imagery and text). Variations or consistencies in the media used for large scale artistic production is not as demonstrative in this case as it could be in others. Furthermore, stelae were commonly erected at many of the northern sites, making a closer consideration of the actual art object (as opposed to the imagery it displays) less illuminating. It is not inconceivable, however, that particular styles would be associated with particular forms of media given the different technical constraints faced by the artist and the different types of intended audiences or contexts of intended consumption. We should not, therefore, expect to find an exact correspondence between the small-scale ceramic styles and the large-scale monumental styles, even within a particular site. That said, certain commonalities should become apparent even so, like the preference for a particular set of figural proportions mentioned above.

area. The lack of provenience is most fully felt in such situations and unfortunately, while a core production area can be posited based on the comparison of visual features found in the canonical group and the monumental record, the dynamic stylistic shifts specific to the clay medium and its mobility in this case makes secondary areas of manufacture much harder to propose. Furthermore, while a major site of manufacture may be posited based on stylistic correspondences, without additional chronologically and geographically specific data there is no way of ascertaining whether production was initiated in that area to begin with or whether that region also borrowed specific forms and approaches from other sites and then used them to develop a particularly cohesive body of material goods. In such a scenario, the resultant ceramic groups could become sociopolitically laden with meaning even if such associations were absent or dissimilar in initial manifestations. Of course, this implied linearity of development does not take into account multi-directional patterns of interchange. Indeed, the material residue likely reflects an even more complex system of dialectical interaction and further awareness of northern ceramic groups will hopefully result in more nuanced analysis of such exchange.

In considering monumental art in the Puuc area, several general trends can be identified. The artists who created the columns, doorjambs, lintels and stelae found at many sites used visual details to fill the space dedicated to imagery. The individual(s) who created the jambs for Structure 2A3 at Kabah (see Pollock 1980: fig. 333), for instance, decided to extend the headdress and backrack forms so that feathers fill the ground behind the main figure. A similar desire to leave no area blank appears in the jambs from Structure 2C6 at the same site (see Pollock 1980: fig. 334); here two or three figures interact and are spaced throughout each scene. Such an arrangement would typically leave the upper central portion of each composition blank but the Kabah artists have inserted swirling volutes into the background (originating either from an undisclosed location or from what appear to be Witz heads) to further activate the composition. The elaborate use of iconographic elements in the areas around the figural forms contrasts with southern approaches, where blank areas framing the figural forms abound.

Sayil, another northern site, exhibits similar packed compositions, even though the figural and costume types are entirely distinct from those found at Kabah. The columns supporting Structure 4B1 at Sayil (see Pollock 1980: fig. 253) extend the visual field longitudinally and portions of the ruler's regalia have been directed along this same orientation. The greater amount of room given to the different pieces of the lord's costume allowed Sayil artists to create a heightened sense of motion—feathers twist and turn in different directions even when originating from the same location. The sculptural lintels from Structure 4B1 (see Pollock 1980: fig. 255) capitalize on this sense of dynamic interplay by representing K'awiil in an unbalanced stance while, again, feathers from his headdress, backrack and added wings fly out around him. Cacabbeec, Xculoc, Xcalumkin and Xcocha follow the same general pattern of image production, as does Uxmal, later, with monuments like Stelae 4 and 14. In fact, figures isolated against a blank ground are more of a rarity than a commonality in the sites surveyed; Oxkintok provides a significant exception and Xcalumkin also contains some works that do not utilize the entire image ground (see the high relief panels from the Hieroglyphic Group).

In addition to the standard filling of space found in the art of many Puuc sites, headdress assemblages often received additional attention. Sayil provides perhaps the most obvious expression of this trend. Even in its highly eroded state, the headdress seen on Stela 3 clearly takes up fully one third of the vertical space while the figure is restricted to the lower two thirds of the composition. The same may be said of later monuments like Stelae 5 and 6 (see Pollock 1980: fig. 276).[328] Kabah artists also devoted a fair amount of space to the headdresses, as in the lintels from Structure 2A3 (see Pollock 1980: figs. 333, 334), although the vertical elongation of the space is not quite so pronounced as it is at Sayil.[329] Other sites follow similar stylistic trends; Xculoc introduces tall headdresses (while also extending the width of the individual monuments

[328] This pattern is less obvious on lintels and columns from Sayil, which tend to favor width over height, as might be expected given their location.

[329] One could argue that the amount of space dedicated to the headdress is more pronounced at Kabah than at Sayil, however, once the fact that this pattern has been applied to the lintels at Kabah is acknowledged. Kabah jambs, however, mimic Sayil jambs in the relative lack of space dedicated to the upper portion of the image.

so as to accommodate elaborate backracks) in the lintels from the Building of the Sculptured Columns (see Pollock 1980: 632). Xcalumkin artists also favored taller headgear associated with elaborate feather adornment, as can be seen in the various jamb images from the Initial Series Building and the Middle Building of the Hieroglyphic Group (see Pollock 1980: figs. 713, 741).[330] Even sites at a further remove from the core Puuc area, like Ixmac, Xcocha and Halal, seem to follow this trend (see Pollock 1980: figs. 799, 856, 927, 925). In fact, the most common way of filling space in the imagery from such sites comes from the elaboration of elite regalia. Feathers from backracks and headdresses fill parts of the scene that would otherwise have remained blank and, in many cases, the scene has been extended so that the various aspects of royal costume can be rendered in elaborate, though basically geometric detail.

The imagery at Oxkintok stands in sharp contrast to such visual patterning. When Oxkintok lords and ladies appear by themselves, the headdresses are so compacted in most cases that the image frame cuts off part of the assemblage (see Pollock 1980: fig. 523).[331] When multiple figures are pictured together, additional room has often been dedicated to the upper portion of the scene. In the case of the tenth century Stela 12, erosion again hampers the analyst's ability to precisely discuss specific visual details (see Graña Behrens 2002: Appendix F; Pollock 1980: fig. 545). In general, despite the fact that the Oxkintok artist dedicated more space to the upper portion of the scene found in the middle area of Stela 12, the headdresses in this section seem to take up little room relative to the space they fill at Kabah, Sayil and other sites. At Oxkintok, the extra space accommodates additional iconographic details (a bird? A floating ancestral figure?) and a hieroglyphic caption.

When medium is also considered, this system of visual expression becomes even clearer. The extreme truncation of the headdresses mentioned at the outset of the

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[330] In a regional variation, Xcalumkin artists also favored relief panels containing seated figures (and associated caption texts) rendered from a full frontal perspective (see Grube 1994: 321, fig. 5; Pollock 1980: fig. 750).

[331] In one particularly interesting instance, the lines of the feathers, while eroded, seem to overlap with the frame, not unlike the ways in which the young lords overlap with their cartouche frames in the isolated bust scenes favored by Chocholá artists.

previous paragraph are found on lintels associated with Structure CA7, while slightly more room was dedicated to the upper portion of the scenes on stelae at the site. This trend parallels the pattern already discussed at Kabah and Sayil, presumably due to technical concerns. Nowhere at Oxkintok do the headdresses take on the increased amount of emphasis or room that artists from other northern sites dedicated to them, however, even when the creator had more room to develop such aspects of elite regalia. Furthermore, the craftsmen who created Stelae 21, 24 and 26 (see Pollock 1980: figs. 547, 548) more drastically reduced the amount of the space allowed for the headdress, akin to lintel representations at the site in that respect. The merchant hat often worn by God L is the one exception to this rule and can be found on Stela 9 (see Pollock 1980: fig. 545); the broad rimmed hat typically takes up more room than other headdress assemblages however, regardless of regional variation in image styles.

Figural proportions also, as alluded to earlier, play a key role in stylistic expression. Sayil scribes, for instance, tended to favor a disproportionate relationship between a figure's torso and his/her lower body. The chest and waist frequently seem much smaller than they would be in reality based on the size of the head and the length and size of the legs in images like that found on the West Column of Structure 4B1 and Stelae 4 and 5 (Pollock 1980: 253, 276). In a reversal of this order, shorter legs support figures with elongated upper bodies and larger heads in Pich Corralche stelae (see Pollock 1980: fig. 386). In contrast, Kabah stone workers tended to emphasize streamlined proportions with slim body lines as in the jambs from Structure 2A3 (Structure 2C6 jambs also display this pattern, although less noticeably; see Pollock 1980: 333, 334, 372). Sculptors from Xcalumkin followed a similar style through the employment of elongated body proportions, although the slim lines of the figure are often obliterated by the sheer wealth of adornments depicted in Xcalumkin carvings like the jambs from the Initial Series Building and the Hieroglyphic Group (see Pollock 1980: figs. 713, 741).

Oxkintok artists tended to create naturalistically proportioned figures with slightly larger-than-normal heads, as in the lintels from Structure CA7 (see Pollock 1980: fig.

523). A fair range of body types can also be seen, but are typically divided between those with slightly thicker proportions (as in the CA7 lintels) and those with more slender profiles (as in ninth century Stela 3 and tenth century Stela 9; see Graña Behrens 2002: Appendix F; Pollock 1980: figs. 545, 544). Those with more solid looking bodies do not come close to the thickness of proportions found in images like the Cacabbeec lintel from the South Group (see Pollock 1980: 894). When slimness appears at Oxkintok, however, it is not used in coordination with elongated proportions, as at Kabah and Xcalumkin, although the distinction becomes less clear (and the figural forms more attenuated) in later examples, like Stela 21 (see Pollock 1980: 547). Such proportionality is mostly connected with human characters due to the relatively restricted use of supernatural representations in jambs, lintels and stelae in the north.

The above stylistic trends, while only briefly delineated here, call attention to several diagnostic Chocholá features. Chocholá artists carefully separated the image scene from the vessel wall by creating a frame in almost all cases. The use of framing elements draws a general visual parallel with monumental sculptural styles certainly, especially in the instances where a more rectilinear border is used. Rarely, however, do the pictorial elements fill the space dedicated to the image in the same way as that favored by the artists who carved stone monuments at sites like Kabah, Sayil and Uxmal.

When creators chose to incorporate busts of young lords in Chocholá examples, blank space (or a crosshatched background) surrounds the lords themselves. While the amount of blank space is not as great as that found in monumental sculpture at the site, this ceramic pattern parallels the image traditions found at Oxkintok. Compare the lintel and tablet from Oxkintok Structure 3C7 (see Pollock 1980: fig. 523) with a pot from the Chocholá corpus (fig. 116), for instance. In all cases, the person's face is shown in profile and placed against a blank background.[332] Such manipulation of space directly contrasts with that found at Kabah; when the above examples are compared with the Kabah Structure 2A3 and 2C6 jambs (see Pollock 1980: figs. 334, 372), the visual

[332] The scarf worn by the individual in the Chocholá example (fig. 116) may also be the same as that displayed by the lord in the tablet from Structure 3C7.

distinction becomes quite obvious. The artist filled the space in front of the ruler's face with feathers from his headdress in the Structure 2A3 jamb while volutes emerge from the background in the battle scenes from Structure 2C6. Even when the scene becomes relatively more packed in some Chocholá examples, (e.g. fig. 21), the details typically take the form of glyphic additions; each figure still resides in his/her own space, which is clearly delineated from that inhabited by the other characters pictured. Despite its eroded state, Stela 3 from Oxkintok (see Pollock 1980: fig. 544b) follows this same visual pattern. In this case, when multiple figures appear they are clearly separated from one another instead of interacting in the more intimate fashion exhibited at Kabah. When the space between them contains some kind of visual detail at Oxkintok, it commonly takes the form of isolated glyphic captions, which also appear in the Chocholá ceramic corpus as indicated by the example mentioned above.

There are a few exceptions to this general pattern, as demonstrated by one piece (fig. 68); in this case, scrolls typically connected with a cartouche in other Chocholá pieces have been divorced from that framing device and instead issue forth directly from the young lord himself. They curl around both in front and behind him and his headdress follows this structure. This approach to aesthetics does not go as far as that found at Kabah, Sayil and other sites, but it does appear at Xcalumkin. The headdresses found on jambs from the Initial Series Building and the Middle Building from the Hieroglyphic Group at Xcalumkin (see Pollock 1980: figs. 713, 741) are less elaborately carved and space is not as packed as in the Kabah examples just enumerated. The feathers from the headdress flip over in front of the ruler's face and also fall down behind his back in both cases, just as they do in Chocholá pieces (see especially fig. 68), in contrast to both the even more restrained visual program found at Oxkintok and the elaborate feather assemblage that fills all space in front of the figure's torso at Kabah.

Such evidence indicates that while most of the canonical style Chocholá pieces would seem, at this early stage of analysis, to fit with a more specifically Oxkintok approach, the style of a few pots is more akin to Xcalumkin. The hieroglyphic inscriptions support this observation. In another Chocholá piece (fig. 43), for instance,

the scribe portrayed the **k'i** syllable in the Xcalumkin manner, with an elongated beak and a carefully articulated, curvilinear transition between the head and neck.[333] Thus, the original suggestion made based on archaeological and hieroglyphic evidence finds support in visual analysis as well. Oxkintok provides the best stylistic parallel for the majority of canonical pieces in the Chocholá style. Some vessels instead seem to favor a more Xcalumkin manner of doing things, however. The Chocholá approach in both cases is, however, quite similar and demonstrates an overarching understanding of the ceramic style that was shared across the two sites. Some of the differences I have observed may also relate to chronological periods and/or shifts. The inscriptions at Xcalumkin are restricted to a few decades (c. 751-771 CE), for instance, which in part explains their consistent appearance (David Stuart 2009, pers. comm.). The overarching connection between several Chocholá pieces (e.g. fig. 43) and Xcalumkin may thus mark a somewhat later regionalized manifestation of the Chocholá style (these vessel types include both the calabash form illustrated here and at least one typical young lord bust). The lack of secure chronological markers within the corpus, however, precludes such a discussion.

While Chocholá artists certainly did not leave huge portions of the ceramic ground blank within the scene boundaries, neither did they typically choose to follow the practice of filling space with elaborate manifestations of elite regalia so popular at many northern locations. Like the Oxkintok imagery, most figures display a relatively pared down form of dress and reside in their own space without overlapping with other individuals or entities. In the Chocholá corpus, creators could have elected to extend the headdress features, thus filling the corners and the areas in front of faces with detail as opposed to the crosshatched or blank backgrounds that currently appear in those areas. The cartouches could also have been altered in such a way as to eliminate any blank spaces at the edges of the scenes, similar to the manner in which the feathers fill all the

[333] The vessel pictured in photographs currently housed by Dumbarton Oaks follows this trend and connects stylistically with Xcalumkin at both iconographic and textual levels.

edges and corners not occupied by human extremities in the jamb from Kabah Structure 2A3 (see Pollock 1980: fig. 334).

In contrast, almost all Chocholá examples of young lords incorporate a truncated headdress. In many cases the human characters wear a simple headband (fig. 73) while in more detailed examples, the regalia consists of jaguar heads (fig. 9) connected with cartouche-like volutes. While these visual details could, theoretically, function in a manner visually similar to the feather inclusions on monuments from many northern sites, they instead serve to frame the scene while situating the viewer relative to the action depicted, as if looking through a portal. Nowhere in the Chocholá corpus does elaborate headgear overwhelm the figures as happens in monumental images from sites like Kabah and Sayil and backrack forms are purposefully reduced in the few instances in which they appear. Certainly some of the jaguar headdresses seen in the busts scene take up about as much space vertically as that dedicated to the youthful individuals. In these representations, however, the artist balanced the composition in such a way that the feline inclusions are proportionately small compared to the size of the human actor. Unlike the Uxmal stelae, where the headdress outweighs the main figure through its sheer size in both its horizontal and vertical dimensions, the scrolls that frame the character counterbalance the jaguar headdress and give the bottom portion of the scene—that in which the young lord appears—more weight (fig. 68). Additionally, in some cases (e.g. fig. 9), the length of the human face and torso receives as much, if not more visual weight as that associated with the elongated jaguar headband, a fact that is emphasized by the 'digging stick' that diagonally bisects the scene and draws the eye away from the regalia and towards the main actor.

The specifically Chocholá manner of creating space is even more pronounced in images of animals (e.g. fig. 22). While scenes depicting the head and torso of a youthful elite place the figure's profile in front of a blank space and eliminate elaborate headgear, they also incorporate the aforementioned swirling cartouche frames that closely surround and even connect with the person pictured. The lifelike depiction of animals, however,

often entails a larger, blank (or crosshatched) ground and further separation from the framing device.

In images depicting supernaturals, Chocholá artists also maintained the effective approach of isolating one or, at the most, two figures against a blank background. Even when the entity takes a serpentine form that winds its way through the scene (as in fig. 59), the craftsmen chose to reduce the number of identifying characteristics and also eliminated the supplementary figures that often appear with such creatures. As I mentioned in the iconography chapter, the speared entity in this example appears on other Maya ceramics with two other deities (see Kerr Database: K595, K1391). Chocholá producers could have easily elongated the scene and truncated the depiction of the aquatic animal while still retaining the vessel shape, which would have enabled them to include other actors. They also could have altered the ceramic form in order to create a more vertically oriented space allowing for additional imagery. The carving technique (as opposed to incised or painted imagery seen in other instances of this theme) certainly did not necessarily restrict the subject matter as examples like the famous Acasaguastlan vessel (see Kerr Database: K2776) indicate. Apparently, however, such a packed approach did not coincide with Chocholá aesthetics as the marine creature, like almost all the other serpentine beings in the corpus, is always shown by itself. Deities frequently emerge from the maw of such beings but only torsos appear for the most part and in all cases the visual emphasis remains on the isolated snake-like creature itself.

The foregoing discussion indicates that Chocholá artists, like Oxkintok craftsmen, tended to focus on the individuals they depicted instead of devoting more space to the feathered aspects of elite regalia. This trend, in turn, resulted in a less 'packed' visual space focusing on one or two key characters placed in the foreground. In some cases, like the one mentioned above, the greater attention paid to elite ornaments seems to reflect Xcalumkin methods but never does the emphasis placed on costume approach that found at northern sites like Sayil. In almost all Chocholá scenes, the figures are isolated within their own space even when pictured with other entities. A few exceptions prove the general rule.

In some images, deities and/or supernatural heads interact with other gods or humans (figs. 3, 60, 84, 103). In one example, a dwarf lies suspended on a waterlily pad emerging from a split head (fig. 60). The rarity of such themes in the monumental record results in a dearth of comparative material. The glyphic text suggests an Oxkintok location of origin based on the appearance of the glyphs and fact that the *bakab* title is rendered, syllabically, as **ba-ka-KAB**, a form connected with other ceramic dedicatory formulae from that area. Visually, the dwarf receives little iconographic elaboration. The head that provides the support for the waterlily pad contains the most detail and the artist has chosen to emphasize the depth of carving by leaving deeply recessed areas blank instead of trying to provide additional iconographic details. Another vessel (fig. 3) also contains a version of *u jaay* that visually parallels those found on Chocholá ceramics connected with an Oxkintok area of manufacture, even though the scenic portion of the vessel combines hands and a disembodied head in an innovative manner. Such a way of rendering space does not connect with that found in any Oxkintok monuments, but neither does it connect with monumental art from other Puuc sites; it seems, then, that the Oxkintok identification suggested by the hieroglyphs remains solid and that the wealth of pictorial detail seen here relates to the ceramic medium and the selection of differing subject matter connected with that medium.

One final vessel (fig. 103) in this group can also be connected with Oxkintok based on hieroglyphic evidence even though it packs the image space in an unusual manner. Here, the dedicatory formula visually parallels other Chocholá glyphic strings that have been connected with the center. In the scene found opposite the text, however, very little blank space can be seen. In another case of supernatural interaction, a mosquito-like figure tries to spear God N as he emerges from his shell. In this and in the other unusual examples just mentioned, the scribes seem to have been playing with the set of loose 'rules' governing image production in the Oxkintok area. These rules, no doubt more flexible than those connected with the representation of human elites, could be manipulated in a small, portable medium in contrast to the continuity found in both monumental and more 'private' renditions of young lords.

On last example diverges significantly from Oxkintok artistic trends (fig. 84). This piece combines figures in a more dynamic manner and cannot be connected with Oxkintok based on hieroglyphic evidence or through iconographic analysis. Here, every part of the scene that might remain blank is instead filled with further iconographic details like disembodied heads, volutes and parts of the individual characters' clothing. The words that appear between the two scene panels also do not connect with an Oxkintok (or a Xcalumkin) approach to writing. In fact, the God N dedicatory head so infrequently seen in the Chocholá corpus finds expression in this rare case.

The use of the God N verb connects this pot with others that support yet another location of manufacture, one that has already been suggested based on supposed provenience. Two examples (figs. 15, 48) seem to correspond with a way of doing things that originates in the Jaina area further to the west. Both vessels show two figures in the midst of interacting in some manner. They also introduce a relatively rare Chocholá form, that of the short, straight-sided cylinder. Shifts in vessel shape have been widely recognized as indicating either temporal or geographic changes (see Culbert and Rands 2007). In this case, since potters produced Chocholá ceramics for a very short period of time, the change in shape may reflect a different region of production.

The formatting of pictorial spaces supports such a connection to a lesser degree. In northern monumental art, two (or more) figures interacting in a non-aggressive way appear approximately seven times at Oxkintok, once at Xcalumkin and on both known stelae from Jaina, while this subject is rare at other roughly contemporaneous sites in Yucatán. Interestingly, these are the three sites that can be connected with Chocholá finds based on suggested provenience and/or hieroglyphic correspondences. While sampling issues abound, the fact that Jaina sculptors used this theme in creating monumental art at the site (and even a carved shell object; see Graña Behrens 2002: Tafel 83) implies that multiple figure scenes and the pairing of individuals was a popular trope at the center. While Oxkintok comes in a close second, artisans at that location created many lintels and other monuments focusing solely on a solitary elite individual.

Xcalumkin is furthest removed, statistically, from this pattern, with only one monument depicting two or more people in conference.

Coe (1973: cat. 53) suggested that one of the aforementioned examples (fig. 15) originated at Jaina based on the information provided by the private collector who owned it at the time of the Grolier Club exhibition.[334] The vessel form as well as the hieroglyphic sequence supports a non-Oxkintok or Xcalumkin origin, while the emphasis on multiple figures falls in line with Jaina modes of representation. This pot corresponds, stylistically, to another in the Chocholá corpus (fig. 48), since the hieroglyphic inscription is almost exactly the same in both cases; both even name the same *muyal*, or cloudy, place (see Stuart and Houston 1994: 44, fig. 51e).[335] The glyphic string is so repetitious across these two examples, in fact, that one scribe likely created both. Iconographically, the second vessel also incorporates two sets of two seated figures although this time the figures are clearly of equal status. The use of the God N dedicatory verb at the outset of both dedicatory formulae also implies that the piece mentioned earlier (fig. 84) should be included in the Jaina grouping. As in the other examples, two individuals occur, although this time the complicated interaction involves supernaturals rather than humans.

The manner of rendering the first three glyphs in all three cases implies that the same scribal group made them all. While the appearance of the words differs enough in the last example to indicate a second scribe's work, the comparative appearance of the Initial Sign, the God N glyph (with its checkered headband twisting down in front of the face in all cases) and the *y-uk'ib* phrase partially composed of a stylized wing syllable implies that the two producers responsible for the two groups of vessels (figs. 15, 48, 83) made similar choices and worked in close proximity to one another. The quality of

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[334] While such provenience data cannot be double-checked at this time since the original collector is now deceased, his scholarly approach to collecting suggests a sound provenience for the piece (Michael Coe 2009, pers. comm.; see also footnote 308).
[335] As Stuart and Houston (1994: 44, fig. 51) note, this place name occurs at Piedras Negras and Naranjo and is by no means specific to either Jaina or the north. In this case, it seems to act as a general place marker; when it appears, it identifies the space as cloudy (or touching the clouds) and/or stormy.

carving might further connect one of these vessels (fig. 86) with another Chocholá pot (fig. 79)—both examples seem to exhibit a less hard-edged quality of line and slightly more modeling in the creation of the main figure.[336]

The stylistic correspondences between monumental art at certain northern sites and the Chocholá corpus offers a few glimpses of evidence supporting multiple sites of production. In general, however, Oxkintok remains the most important center associated with Chocholá manufacture. Even the set of basic proportions seen on many ceramics in the canonical group support an Oxkintok connection. The relation between the different body parts seen in many instances (e.g. fig. 2) emphasizes a basically lifelike set of proportions while head size has been increased. This parallels Oxkintok traditions while also complementing the function of the different parts of the figure—in the example just mentioned, the head contains most of the diagnostic attributes, like fish barbels, that allow this entity to be identified as GI. The many ballplayers in the Chocholá corpus also compare directly with Oxkintok image traditions; the slightly thicker body type and large head so popular at Oxkintok is particularly evident in one example (fig. 35). Figural types more generally favor massive shoulders that create a soft downward curve at that center in contrast to the body types typical in other northern monuments (take into account directional gaze and compare and contrast the figure's left shoulder in the Oxkintok tablet from Structure 3C7 with the lord's right shoulder in the west column from Structure 4B1 at Sayil; see Pollock 1980: figs. 523, 253 respectively). The artist only presented a partial image of the young lord in each case, but the same soft curve found at Oxkintok is implied in many of the bust images found in the Chocholá corpus (e.g. fig. 47).

The image-based analysis supports the connections between Oxkintok, Xcalumkin and Jaina first made in relation to suggested find locations and hieroglyphic comparisons. There are, however, a number of ceramics that clearly participated in the Chocholá style but that did not, just as clearly, come from any of the three sites just mentioned. Two root issues affect the ability to link certain Chocholá ceramics with a

[336] The glyphs in the last piece mentioned (fig. 79) take a more geometric form.

particular site based on pictorial features. First, the panels, lintels, tablets and stelae at northern sites tend to focus on elite individuals and thus do not provide material suitable for extensive comparisons with supernatural representations. Even at a stylistic level it is preferable to compare like images with like images as different rules could and did govern the presentation of humans vs. deities. Second, the process of stylistic diffusion mentioned at the outset of this section complicates the issue. Not only does the different medium obviate a one-to-one correspondence between monumental iconographic and ceramic programs, the efforts on the part of some ceramicists to appropriate styles resulted in an unusual combination of visual traits not typically representative of the area in which the ceramics were created. Furthermore, skill levels are extremely difficult to take into account. Some ceramics indicate a typically Chocholá approach to aesthetics while using a slightly more geometric manner of image rendition or a thicker quality of line (like that seen in fig. 72). Ceramicist students at centers like Oxkintok might have produced such vessels.

Certain stylistic trends seem to speak to yet other production locations even though additional sites cannot be identified specifically at this time. An unusually shaped frame containing a lord with an atypical profile and headdress who holds an unusual double-headed serpent/sky bar appears in one example (fig. 74). The geometric pattern of figural presentation used in other pieces (e.g. fig. 117) also suggests secondary regions of production. Other pots incorporate relatively typical representations of seated young lords alongside unreadable pseudoglyphs (e.g. fig. 81), while the scribes at the three site centers already named were clearly literate and even capable of playing with different glyphic forms (see Chapter 5). Different vessel forms and truncated cartouche frames also occur in other cases (e.g. fig. 80), and would seem to indicate yet more subsidiary locations of manufacture.

*Contextualizing Image Style and Artistic Practices:*
*A Brief Note on Stylistic Difference*

The foregoing analysis has shown a clear connection between the Chocholá style and certain sites while disjunction defines the visual relationships between the corpus and other northern locations. Just as clearly, however, while Chocholá images display an affinity for doing things a certain way in accord with particular northern approaches developing or already established at around the time of production, the end result leaves the viewer with the impression of difference in appearance between the two media (ceramic and stone). Despite the fact that the same formal principles governed the creation of both, why then do the images in stone employ a relatively thicker quality of line and slightly different standards regarding the use of space and proportionality than those found in the ceramic medium?[337]

The answer to this question remains a mystery but perhaps there is some truth to Tate's (1985: 123, 132) early statements regarding northern use of southern styles. While Ardren (1996: 237) correctly pointed out the "all-too-common bias that views sophisticated iconographic images as the hallmark of the Southern Lowlands, and somehow aberrant when found in the North," nonetheless, the iconography does *look* different even though it uses symbolism well-established in the north (as Ardren [1996: 244] indicated). Indeed, in early periods, Oxkintok, one of the major producers of the Chocholá style, is now known to have employed approaches commonly associated with southern centers (García Campillo 1992: 190; García Campillo and Lacadena 1987: 96; Varela Torrecilla 1989: 81, 1990: 120, 1992: 132, 1998: 38-39). Furthermore, in the Early and Middle Classic, Maya lords in the Yucatán Peninsula imported polychrome ceramics from the Petén and, while they also initiated their own polychrome tradition, did not chose to do so to the same extent as their southern neighbors (Varela Torrecilla 1992: 132, 1998: 38-39, 2002: 68).

[337] In considering style, I try to avoid value-based terms like "chunky" vs. "refined" when discussing such visual disparities.

The use of multiple kinds of line and more elongated figural proportions in canonical Chocholá pieces may thus reflect the *in situ* development of Oxkintok visual identity. While northern lords were in the process of developing distinct iconographic programs that, in the Late and Terminal Classic, separated them visually from their southern neighbors, the apparent shift in dynastic politics at Oxkintok, combined with the history of image production at the site, may have resulted in the lingering use, in the ceramic medium, of such formal elements grounded in local prestige traditions. In other words, at a time of change, Oxkintok lords may have wanted to assert their place in the northern political sphere by initiating innovative façade programs while retaining some of the visual characteristics already found at the site in concurrent ceramic production. Indeed, such use of style is not confined wholly to the canonical Chocholá corpus itself. As García Campillo (1992: 190; see also García Campillo and Lacadena 1987: 96) noted, this period of Oxkintok expansion contrasts with expansion at other northern sites due to the various monumental and ceramic parallels between Oxkintok and the southern lowlands. Notably, the ceramics project their northern manufacture locus through the use of new slateware technology and idiosyncratic hieroglyphic sequences, for instance, while at the same time drawing on traditional forms of representation both in the nuanced use of iconographic symbols and in the fine-line style also associated with polychrome production. Significantly, such polychromes would have been immediately recognized as luxury goods of the highest ilk and the application of the thin line style to the carved ceramic medium may have been used to establish Chocholá ceramics as high-end commodities.

The difference apparent between the canonical Chocholá vessel sent to Tiho (fig. 2) and the Chocholá variant that was presumably manufactured in that area may support such a view. The thicker use of line in the Tiho produced pot (fig. 31) could indicate that while the artists in that region were influenced by the Chocholá style, they did not have the same *in situ* reasons for retaining the thin line style associated with the canonical group and chose to discard it. The particular visual appearance that Tate noted in conjunction with canonical pieces simply did not pertain to the Tiho frame of reference in

this scenario.[338] As should be clear from my comments here, I do not see the non-Oxkintok vessel as representing lesser artistic skill, but rather a slightly different perception of style in both its passive and ideological roles. While I have been suggesting that Oxkintok-region potters intentionally retained certain stylistic attributes already found in that area, the rendition of appearance may have resulted from a particular approach not necessarily consciously recognized. Artists (not to mention elite citizens) would likely have been acutely aware of such visual difference, however, hence my suggestion regarding the ideological manipulation of stylistic precepts.

Additionally, such visual analogues may have spoken to larger systems of exchange in place at the site, thus not only asserting the connection between places like Oxkintok, Xcalumkin and Jaina, but also visually demonstrating Oxkintok's farther flung network of exchange. Certainly northern and southern interactions do not end in the Late Classic, even though the south is beginning to experience the pressures that ultimately lead to the mini-collapses that rock the Petén region during the Late and Terminal Classic periods. Pabellon Molded-Carved vessels initially created in the center of the Petén region, for instance, are found in both locations during the Terminal Classic, demonstrating the continued existence of exchange and strong interregional communication (see Chapter 7). Thus, the awareness of visual difference might have related not only to certain visual traditions already actively maintained at Oxkintok, they could also have indicated their owners' access to, and control of, extended commercial and sociopolitical routes of communication.

## *Conclusion*

The foregoing discussion has indicated that three of the sites thought to be connected to the Chocholá style based on suggested provenience and hieroglyphic

[338] The Dzibilchaltún/Mérida region previously employed ceramic traditions with ties to the Péten area (Varela Torrecilla 1990: 122), so the reason for abandoning the stylistic characterisitics mentioned above may result from a slightly different sociopolitical atmosphere in the eastern area of the Yucatán Peninsula during the Late Classic.

sources find supporting evidence in the visual corpus. All three avenues of investigation mark Oxkintok as the primary center of production but they also show that this vessel style was manufactured in reduced numbers at Xcalumkin and Jaina. Interestingly, this multilevel analysis has demonstrated that several key visual traditions existed across the three sites while they were relatively absent at other northern localities. A similar way of treating headdresses specifically and elite regalia generally appears at all three centers, although Oxkintok provides the most austere representations in coordination with most pared down Chocholá depictions. Compositions favoring multiple figures interacting peacefully also occur in all three places while they are rare at other roughly contemporaneous northern centers.[339] Such similarities, in addition to the specific connections the Chocholá style has with each site, may indicate a more enduring set of sociopolitical alliances at these three locations, despite the distance that separates them. Other examples extend such an exchange network to include Tiho as well, given archaeological and epigraphic evidence.

While more evidence is needed, the dramatic stylistic variation found in certain Chocholá pieces, many of which fall outside the canonical category, implies that a number of secondary or even tertiary sites produced the style as well, as a way of imitating and appropriating the status symbols of their more established neighbors. Such borrowing, like style itself, could be expressed either passively or actively and could, furthermore, reflect either well or poorly on those connected with the original referent. As officially sanctioned archaeological efforts continue in the north, scholars will have more ceramic and monumental evidence to compare to the Chocholá corpus. The survey I have conducted of northern sculptural programs is also by no means exhaustive, even with the archaeological evidence currently available. A thorough review of the northern image record is outside the scope of the present work and I have tried to select representative sites from the area under consideration instead. As more evidence is brought to bear on the stylistic question of northern production, the Chocholá place

[339] Artists repeatedly depicted a multitude of equal-status figures in the monumental record at later sites like Chichen Itza, but the temporal progression of the Chocholá style ends well before the craftsmen at Chichen Itza develop such image programs.

within that schema should become even clearer. Increased excavation activity will also likely result in a more nuanced understanding of site-specific ceramic production in addition to furthering our awareness of regional development and overlap from a specifically ceramic perspective.

Currently, analysis of the evidence supports several larger conclusions. The Oxkintok area created a large number of pieces in the Chocholá style. Furthermore, ceramics connected with Oxkintok regional production demonstrate a few different pictorial trends and vessel forms, thus indicating that, at its height, the style fully developed into several foundational, internally consistent subgroups.[340] The immediate sphere of Oxkintok control certainly covered smaller centers like Xkipché, which depositional and stylistic data indicates received (or possibly produced) at least one vessel associated with one of the aforementioned Chocholá subsets. Reports recording general provenience also suggest that other standard examples from these subgroups were disseminated in southerly and southeasterly directions, ultimately coming to rest at Ticul and Peto. Strikingly similar pieces were also likely manufactured at Xcalumkin, approximately 55 miles away from the Oxkintok core zone. The similarities shared by all the pieces disseminated and/or created along such spatial trajectories imply an extended network involving direct (and multi-directional) dialectical interaction between these regions, especially at the sociopolitical level.

Variations of the core subsets associated with Oxkintok can be found at an even further remove. The Jaina region along the western coast, for instance, likely produced several artists who created a handful of ceramics according to the aesthetic 'laws' governing Chocholá manufacture. Furthermore, the Oxkintok regional manifestation of the Chocholá style resulted in one piece made specifically for a Tiho (Mérida) lord. Located around the same distance from Oxkintok as Jaina but in the opposite direction, Tiho also seems to have created Chocholá vessels related to, yet distinct from the core

[340] Shifts in vessel form and decoration type might reflect small-scale temporal changes within the fifty to one hundred year span connected with Chocholá production. Such possibilities cannot be investigated without further evidence of distinct chronological periods within the Chocholá corpus.

groups connected with that power player. While the pieces from Jaina and Tiho remain visually distinct from the stylistic clusters connected specifically with Oxkintok, their participation in the larger Chocholá style adds further dimensions to the sociopolitical understanding of northern interaction. Accordingly, Oxkintok controlled a nucleated region extending as far as Ticul and Xcalumkin. In a less overt, more diffused manner, Oxkintok also developed exchange networks that stretched from the west coast on one side to Mérida on the other.

Such conclusions are supported by other avenues of investigation that have solidified Oxkintok's place as a major power player in the Puuc region beginning in the Middle Classic. By the time of Chocholá production in the Late Classic period, for instance, Oxkintok was in the middle of a major rebuilding period, probably associated with a shift in governmental practices and **OHL-si-?-TOK's** rise to power (López de la Rosa and Velázquez Morlet 1992: 206-207; Varela Torrecilla 1998). Roads or *sacbes* that not only connect different areas of the site but that also extend out from it along each of the major directions were newly constructed at this time (López de la Rosa and Velázquez Morlet 1992: 206). One of these *sacbes* might have even connected Oxkintok to Uxmal (Andrews 1975: 276). Indeed, Oxkintok as a whole grew and consolidated what previously had been distinct areas within the site; smaller centers under Oxkintok's control exhibit growth patterns at this time as well (López de la Rosa and Velázquez Morlet 1992: 211). During the Late Classic, before Uxmal's ascension, Oxkintok is "easily…the largest and most important city within the Puuc region," as Andrews (1975: 279) rightly suggested. In this context then, it is not surprising that Oxkintok, under **OHL-si-?-TOK'**, complemented its new architectural activity with a ceramic program that legitimized high elite power by incorporating both innovative and traditional approaches. Information regarding Chocholá distribution, when supplemented with detailed stylistic analysis, provides an even more nuanced view of the geographical extent of Oxkintok power and prestige.

# Chapter 7
# Conclusion:
# Larger Ceramic Traditions, Sociopolitical and Economic Implications

## *Introduction*

As I have demonstrated throughout the preceding chapters, the Chocholá style represents a uniquely northern manifestation of pottery manufacture. More than that, craftsmen (and/or women) working in this style created an idiosyncratic corpus that indicates a highly regional approach to vessel production generally, within the Yucatán Peninsula, and specifically within the Puuc area. The depth of carving (Chapters 3, 4), the unusual iconographic combinations (Chapter 4) and the unique way of approaching writing (Chapter 5) all work together to create a particular confluence of attributes. The literature on the topic has repeatedly and rightfully reflected the distinctive, localized flavor exhibited by the style (Chapter 2). Despite their apparent eccentricities, however, Chocholá vessels just as clearly derive from earlier Maya traditions as well as marking a point of development in the larger Late Classic ceramic phenomena that becomes the cohesive, semi-monolithic Cehpech complex by the Terminal Classic.

In this chapter, I continue placing the Chocholá style in context by focusing on temporal dimensions as opposed to the geographic level of analysis highlighted in the preceding chapter (Chapter 6). Unfortunately, many uncertainties face scholars working with elite ceramic wares. The looting that destroyed any kind of specific depositional understanding for many pieces in the Chocholá style is widespread and affects many other ancient Maya luxury goods as well. Now as then, high-end demand results in the limited supply of objects containing imagery and writing. Thus, many of the ceramics one might use to understand the development of different elite traditions through time are themselves only loosely tied to particular areas like the Puuc region or the so-called 'central' Petén of Guatemala. Sampling raises another related issue: as one would expect, ceramicists created fewer luxury wares in comparison to more utilitarian types. Furthermore, many sites remain only partially excavated. Finally, those pieces that have

been looted often reside in private collections and receive only spotty publication dependant upon their current owners' disposition.

While these are serious concerns, the picture is not as bleak as it might first appear. With regard to Chocholá ceramics, enough (published) evidence exists to demonstrate larger image- and ceramic-based continuities through time in spite of the dramatic visual differences that occur at particular moments. In what follows below, I analyze several different visual parallels that indicate a particularly Maya way of approaching aesthetics and pottery manufacture. These methods are by no means monolithic and change dramatically over time but the similarities are still visible at least from the Early Classic through to the Terminal Classic period. Given the patchy nature of such data, however, I do not attempt to develop a direct line of progression through time linking the various traditions I discuss here. I instead choose to note dramatic parallels in appearance and suggest that the broad time frame across which such parallels can be drawn indicates a long lasting set of self-referential practices in the production of images and an awareness of, indeed an interest in, antiquity as well as continuity. I leave the task of filling in the gaps to the future scholars, who will have access to an even larger body of work, especially in the north, as excavation continues. I conclude this chapter and my work regarding the Chocholá with a larger discussion of what these practices meant for the northern rulers connected with the manufacture of the Chocholá style and try to answer the following questions: why Chocholá and why (c.) 700-800 CE?

### *Related Ceramic Traditions*

Aspects of a quintessentially Chocholá approach to ceramic imagery actually develop much earlier in the Maya region. Despite the fact that they form a distinctive assemblage in the Late Classic, many of the attributes used to define the style as a cohesive unit appear in earlier and later periods. Potters used deep carving early on, for instance, and also occasionally chose to divorce the image from the rest of the vessel upon which it rests.

Despite some significant differences, an Early Classic carved bowl now housed at Dumbarton Oaks provides a particularly direct visual parallel (fig. 118). The artist carved this vessel out of limestone at a much earlier time than that during which the Chocholá style was manufactured. It may have been created in the Yucatán Peninsula, although the Petén region of Guatemala is more likely.[341] Iconographically, the Maize God appears in various poses along with cacao symbolism (complementing the function of the vessel as a container for a chocolate beverage) (see Fields and Reents-Budet 2005: cat. 101; Miller and Martin 2004: plate 33). The actual style of the figure—his proportions, the size of his head relative to his body and the way in which the shoulders are emphatically rounded, for example—certainly reflects Early Classic systems of expression that differ from those found in association with the Chocholá depiction of young lords. Three scenes also appear as opposed to the one or two image panels that characterize Chocholá imagery.

If it were not for these points of disjunction, the bowl would appear to participate in the same, though slightly modified, visual schema that defines the core or canonical set of Chocholá production. Borders in the form of double circles—e.g. geometric frames—set the images apart from the rim, base and wall of the Dumbarton Oaks bowl. The reduplication of the circular shape resembles the cartouche-like qualities found in many of the Chocholá framing elements. The Dumbarton Oaks scribe also inserted raised rectangular grounds containing incised glyphs and thus, like Chocholá artists, called attention to the more heavily carved nature (i.e. the greater three-dimensionality) of the associated iconographic elements. In the case of the Early Classic piece, this stylistic feature may relate either to stone carving techniques or to the methods used to create bowls out of less permanent materials like wood. Additionally, vertical texts flank, yet are separate from the images; their placement relative to the imagery and the fact that they are incised into the vessel wall within a rectangular frame reappears in the later

[341] Virginia M. Fields and Dorie Reents-Budet (2005: cat. 101) give the Yucatán Peninsula as the place of origin, while Mary Miller and Simon Martin (2004: plate 33) suggest Mexico or Guatemala. David Stuart (2009, pers. comm.) has noted that the paleographic and stylistic approaches it displays connect it with the Petén region.

Chocholá approach. Indeed, such dramatic visual similarities would imply an even more direct link with the ceramics under consideration here if it were not for the early glyphic forms themselves and the limestone medium. While separated by great temporal and spatial gaps, the Chocholá corpus and the Dumbarton Oaks bowl seem to share similar artistic approaches to aesthetics and the carved ceramic medium.

If the Dumbarton Oaks bowl is not simply an isolated example (and it does not seem to be—see Schmidt, de la Garza and Nalda [1998: cat. 444]), the strong connection between Oxkintok and the southern lowlands during the Early Classic (see García Campillo and Lacadena 1987: 96) may have led to a northern awareness of southern customs—the same patterns of production that apparently either resulted in or, at the least, also influenced the sculptor who made the Dumbarton Oaks example (David Stuart 2009, pers. comm.; see also footnote 342). In this case, the Chocholá corpus might represent an acute awareness of, and desire to, actively refer to such earlier image traditions. It is equally probable, however, that Chocholá potters intentionally mimicked carving traditions associated with wood or calabash vessels, as is also possibly true of the Dumbarton Oaks carver. Unfortunately, such materials have not withstood the test of time and the investigator is left to wonder if they followed similar artistic patterns. The calabash shapes that appear in the Chocholá group seem to support the suggestion that many of the potters working in the style alluded to production traditions connected with the impermanent containers used by all sectors of society. The length of time enjoyed by the tradition exemplified by the Dumbarton Oaks bowl and the later Chocholá style also speaks, in the case of Chocholá selection, to an intentional effort to make a sense of continuity and heritage visually apparent through the employment of familiar, long-lived forms, frames and iconographic types.

Continuities between the Chocholá corpus and other, earlier traditions continue beyond the Early Classic and into the Classic period proper. Just before potters began developing the deeply carved northern style, for example, other ceramicists probably working in the Calakmul region created a lidded vessel (fig. 119) displaying the portrait of a young lord—probably Yuknom Ch'een of Calakmul who is named in the vertical text

opposite the image—and his wife (pictured here) placed in elaborate cartouche frames (see Martin 2009: 73; Prager 2004: esp. figs. 1-4).[342] Again, in addition to its early date, a number of elements separate this piece from the core Chocholá style. The texts, for instance, combine both a horizontal line of three glyphs and a vertical string of five blocks in a manner only seen in one Chocholá example, an outlier itself (fig. 75). The artist also placed the bust of the young lord in an elaborate frame directly connected with calendrical signs through the use of the standard circular cartouche format complete with the typical tripartite scrolls at the bottom of the border. Another small disjunction, which becomes significant when the Chocholá approach to aesthetics is taken into account, appears in the heavily detailed depictions of the portraits. In contrast to the reduction of regalia evident in the Chocholá Young Lord category, Yuknom Ch'een and his wife's elaborate garb includes beaded pectorals and necklaces. Yuknom Ch'een also wears a backrack and what seems to be a jester god head, while he and his wife sport massive headdress assemblages. Furthermore, the vessel form, including the conical lid, diverges strongly from the ceramic shapes found in the Chocholá corpus.

The visual correspondences between this example and ceramics in the canonical Chocholá style are dramatic, nonetheless. The carved image pictures two cartouches containing only the torso and head of the lord in one and his lady in the other (see Prager 2004: figs. 1, 2), for example, as in the Isolated Busts and Lone Lords portrait scenes (see fig. 34). In this case, too, the individuals interact with the cartouche in a similar manner—their hands rest on the bottom of the frame and their headdresses overlap with the top and side borders. Prager (2004: 32) even observed red pigment in the Schaffhausen panels similar to cinnabar that many artists rubbed over and into Chocholá images. Perhaps the most obvious link lies in the appearance of Yuknom Ch'een's jaguar head headdress, with its open mouth, which directly parallels many Chocholá examples even down to the manner in which the head becomes a headdress attached, through

[342] The vessel, called the Schaffhausen Pot, marks the end of the twelfth k'atun and so has been dated to 9.12.0.0.0 or 672 CE (Martin 2009: 73).

wrapping, to the lord's cranium.[343] A swirl issues forth from in front of the king's face and curls upwards as a complement to the image frame in a manner reminiscent of the way in which volutes seem to emerge from headdresses in some Chocholá pieces and then actually become part of the cartouche-like frame.[344]

The combination of a portrait head and a cartouche connected with units of time functions as an allusion to the *ajaw* calendrical sign that also appears, albeit rarely, in the Chocholá corpus (fig. 16) (see Stuart 1996). The choice of a lone *ajaw* sign contrasts with representations of time found at Calakmul and further south into the Petén lowlands, as I noted earlier (Chapter 6). Indeed, the Schaffhausen Pot simply alludes to the *ajaw* sign instead of preceding it with a number and making it more directly calendrical in nature as Chocholá artists did. The Schaffhausen scribe chose to include more complete temporal information in the associated inscriptions through the reference to the 10 Ajaw 8 Yaxk'in period ending (Stuart 1996: 167), thus allowing himself to create large *ajaw* portraits not accompanied (and thus deemphasized by) a second calendrical term (i.e. 8 Yaxk'in). In this way, while the artistic intention is comparable and the visual effect quite similar, the specific manner of execution differs enough to clearly separate the Calakmul ceramic from (and identify it as a precursor to) the Chocholá style. I am not suggesting that northern artists actually saw the Schaffhausen Pot and decided to copy its format directly from the original example, but rather that at around this time in ancient Maya history, a specific aesthetic approach and symbol set became particularly popular both in the north and in the border lands between the north and the south. Indeed, Piedras Negras Stela 3 (see Stuart and Graham 2003: 9.24-9.28) pictures a vessel very similar to the Schaffhausen pot. In the stela, the pot appears on the ruler's right hand, complete with a quatrefoil cartouche and pagoda lid. The Piedras Negras evidence supports the

[343] Yuknom Ch'een's wife wears a completely different headdress assemblage (fig. 119).
[344] This volute could instead be an indication of the jaguar's breath curving down towards the face of the elite individual. In either case, the visual effect remains the same.

idea that the Schaffhausen pot represents a specific high elite form not restricted to Calakmul.[345]

While the two vessels I have mentioned—the Dumbarton Oaks specimen and the Schaffhausen Pot—provide only two examples of the trajectory to which I have been alluding, the stylistic parallels in the arrangement of imagery suggest a larger aesthetic pattern. Another, apparently more widely used ceramic analogue also occurs in the Classic period immediately preceding the Late Classic development of the Chocholá style. In the Oxkintok Regional complex, for example, Brainerd (1958: 132, fig. 12j) first identified a redware variant that included "incised banding lines and design" as well as "vertical channeling." Varela Torrecilla (1998: 76-77, fig. 3.25) later named this ware the Chenijá Acanalado type, Chenijá variety. Significantly, the striations that the Stylized Calabash Chocholá Sub-style displays recall the grooves modeled on the surface of the vessel wall in the Chenijá case. This similarity in patterning becomes even more obvious when Silil Acanalado type, Silil variety and Mazul Acanalado type, Mazul variety examples are considered (see Varela Torrecilla 1998: figs. 3.36, 4.10).[346] The last two types are found at Oxkintok and Jaina while the Mazul group may also appear at Dzibilchaltún (see Varela Torrecilla 1998: 87, 227), all sites that have also been connected with the Chocholá style slightly later in time (see Chapter 6). The ridges in each case mark a reference, however stylized, to the natural calabash containers also modified for use by the Maya as drinking vessels (see Chapter 3). The Silil Acanalado sherd from Jaina and the stylized subset of the calabash-shaped Chocholá vessels (e.g. fig. 51) in particular both use a rounded apex to terminate each channel in the vessel wall. This similarity emphasizes the visual parallel shared by the various Classic period types just mentioned and the Late Classic Chocholá examples. The paste and slip also frequently range in color but red or brown are most common (see Varela Torrecilla 1998: 76, 87, 182), as they are in the Chocholá style.

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[345] I would like to thank David Stuart (2009, pers. comm.) for calling my attention to the parallels offered by Piedras Negras Stela 3.

[346] See also the Peba Compuesto type, Peba variety (Varela Torrecilla 1998: 182, fig. 3.104).

Stylized calabash forms enjoyed continuous, frequent selection throughout the Maya world beginning at least in the Middle Classic and the Chocholá style intentionally participated directly in this well-established tradition of pottery manufacture. While the calabash shape, stylized though it became, was an oft-employed form in the Classic period, popular throughout Maya civilization, it significantly appeared specifically at sites connected with later Chocholá production.[347] The craftsmen responsible for creating such vessels might have chosen the simplified natural form as a model due to "high error loading;" in other words, "potters decide to follow a technological strategy because that strategy was successful in the past and they have reason to suspect that it will work again" (Arnold 2007: 92, 110). According to Philip Arnold (2007: 110), such a process of selection "contributes to a routinization of behavior that promotes a successful outcome; this routinization is sometimes characterized as 'conservative.'" Arnold (2007: 91, 110, emphasis in original) also argues that the reference to earlier ceramic types relates to a conscious process, that such "long-term continuity in technological systems does not occur without effort," and that potters who follow these earlier developments "*resist* change and render the world predictable." In the case of the Calabash and Stylized Calabash forms in the Chocholá corpus, the vessel types mark an alternative to the smooth walled variant that contains either text by itself and/or carved scene panels, thus indicating consciousness of choice. Furthermore, the selection of forms found in nature and used since the beginnings of Maya civilization may also have carried important ideological messages relating to heritage, longevity and/or personal disposition (in the emphasis placed on vessel types used by all sectors of society).

From a perspective focusing on continuity and tradition, not surprisingly, the Chocholá manner of approaching ceramic production acts as just one part of a larger trajectory. As I have mentioned previously (Chapter 3), no artistic expression can ever be completely unique. Potters are influenced by what has come before and cannot completely divorce themselves from such a context, just as they must draw from such

[347] The Chinijá group, for instance, seems to correspond to ceramic production at Becán and Uaxactún as well as Oxkintok (Varela Torrecilla 1998: 77)

older, longer lasting traditions in order to create objects that those around them can understand. The similarities shared between the Dumbarton Oaks, Schaffhausen and Chocholá vessels indicate just such a thread of continuity in image traditions, as do the general calabash shapes just discussed. Even though key differences clearly distinguish the types considered above from one another, the dramatic parallels also suggest that Chocholá producers sought to reintroduce and reinterpret older ways of presenting imagery. As the slightly earlier Calakmul pot also indicates, this trend is not restricted to the Chocholá style itself.

Despite such continuity, however, the Chocholá examples that incorporate scenes mark a dramatic break from previous northern elite wares. Many pieces certainly seem to emphasize a manner of approaching imagery that coincides with long-held southern precepts at precisely the moment when Oxkintok begins to emphasize a powerful lord (**OHL-si-?-TOK'**). Chocholá artists did not simply copy earlier, southern ways of doing things, however. While similarities in iconographic details and vessel appearance certainly occur between north and south in this case, as I have shown above, the style also actively differed not only from previous elite forms of ceramic expression found in the north generally and at Oxkintok specifically, it diverged from southern approaches in its rejection of polychrome decoration and development of a complex, idiosyncratic corpus of hieroglyphic inscriptions displaying predominantly northern attributes. This marks a distinct shift away from previous inscription styles at Oxkintok, which fall in line with those found at southern centers (especially Tikal) (García Campillo 1991: 74).

The Chocholá rejection of certain methods of ceramic manufacture connected with the south can be seen in other vessels likely originating in the north or borderland areas. The aesthetic trends relating to carving and image rendition take a number of different forms in the Late Classic. The emphasis on carving and the separation between image and ceramic ground occurs in various contexts, for example. A large number of roughly contemporary ceramics in related traditions share similar attributes, thus indicating the resurgence of a particular approach to the carved ceramic medium in the north. As I noted in Chapter 3, quite a few examples date approximately to the Late

Classic and are similar enough to the Chocholá style that I needed to explicitly exclude them from my acting definition. One example in particular (fig. 56) demonstrates marked visual parallels yet clearly cannot be classed as Chocholá.[348] In this case, as I pointed out previously, the use of two separate, nested frames (both of which can be found in the Chocholá corpus by themselves but never combined in this manner), in addition to the faux-wood surface treatment, sets this pot apart from the Chocholá style despite the appearance of similar attributes. As this specimen indicates, there were several different possible solutions that shared a similar approach to pottery production and satisfied the demand for carved ceramics in the Late Classic.

Analogous approaches to carving do not account for all of the various visual comparisons between temporally related approaches. The calabash shape that appeared earlier continues not only as a major subset of Chocholá production but also in other, roughly contemporaneous ceramic sequences. Brainerd (1958: fig. 48e) published a pot from a collection in Mérida, for example, that incorporates a stylized calabash shape in the rendition of the ceramic body. Interestingly, the craftsman who made this vessel also utilized a pseudoglyphic band emphasized by circles added in trickle paint. This bowl and the Chocholá Calabash Sub-styles take the stylized natural form popular in previous times and add hieroglyphic texts (or at least the appearance of hieroglyphs). The trickle paint evident in Brainerd's example is only rarely found on calabash-shaped vessels in the Chocholá corpus (see Green 1997: figs. 1, 3) but artists frequently included such post-fire additions on Chocholá pots containing imagery. Indeed, the secondary painting often acts as a period attribute (see below).

Despite the continuity expressed by these and earlier image programs, major technological changes begin to enter the ceramic record at around this time. Potters began developing the Slateware technology associated with improved performance (e.g. lower porosity and higher resistance to fracture) at this time (see Barba and Varela 1992:

[348] Reents-Budet (2001: 255) connects this vessel with a Yucatecan system of manufacture.

154, 156).[349] As Christopher Gunn (2004: 5.1) notes, in discussing the ceramics of Kiuic, pre-slates date to around 700 CE while Muna slatewares appear on the scene as the primary production type by about 800 CE.[350] Slates are the predominate ware manufactured in the north by the Terminal Classic and form the core of the Cehpech ceramic complex that subsumes almost all northern pottery production in later periods (see Brainerd 1958; Smith 1971). Significantly, the date range noted at Kiuic marks the suggested beginning and end of Chocholá production, thus positioning the style in the middle of the shift to a new paste technology. The chronological data supports the transitional nature of the style, which crosscuts ceramic categories and includes slates as well as other types (e.g. plumbate, see fig. 41). Trickle paint, like that found on many pieces in the Chocholá corpus, characterizes the earliest development of the slateware types, which Brainerd (1958: 52-59) dates as roughly contemporaneous with Chocholá production. The development of the slate medium, in fact, forms part of a trend favoring greater standardization in addition to emphasizing carving and monochromatic forms of surface decoration at the expense of polychrome painting (which could be found on ceramics produced and imported into the north in small numbers during the Classic period) (see Brainerd 1958: 52-59; Varela Torrecilla 1998: especially 27-28).

The same motivations that dictated Chocholá production clearly survived beyond the time during which artists created that particular ceramic style. Chocholá ceramics overlap with the development of the tradition that eventually becomes fully formed in the slatewares and a few fine paste types associated with the Cehpech ceramic complex. After potters in the Yucatán Peninsula ceased making Chocholá ceramics, another related, widely distributed type called Provincia Plano Relief began appearing in the

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[349] The development of the slateware type indicates that while some pottery shapes and methods of manufacture may have stayed the same, the creation of the pastes used to form ceramics deviated from the 'high error loading' mentioned earlier.

[350] As Gunn (2004: 5.1) states: "Es decir, pensamos probable que los pre-pizarras de Kiuic datan para algún momento alrededor de 700 d.C, y son reemplazados por Muna pizarras en algún momento alrededor de 800 d. C." The Kiuic data is relevant here not only because it is a northern site at the edge of the Puuc region but also because similar ceramic changes occur at Oxkintok at this time and correspondences exist between the ceramic residues at both sites (Gunn 2004: 5.1; Varela Torrecilla 1998: 41).

north.[351] The deep carving characteristic of the Chocholá style slowly disappears at this point, replaced by incised line and a movement towards more homogenous scene types, although the fine paste connected with the Provincia pieces (see Brainerd 1958: fig. 59; Smith 1971: fig. 9) relates to the thin vessel walls found in Chocholá examples. In relation to the portrait busts of the Chocholá style, reclining figures are particularly popular among Provincia Plano Relief craftsmen, as are serpentine heads similar to those found in Chocholá iconography (see Smith 1971: fig. 9). Provincia vessels have been found at Oxkintok in the Terminal Classic Ukmul II complex (840-1000 CE) (Varela Torrecilla 1998: 303-304).

Despite the movement away from the heavy use of carving on multiple planes that functioned as one of the defining features of the Chocholá corpus, Provincia examples demonstrate several complementary trends. First, Provincia ceramics clearly separate the scene panels from the rim and base of the vessel by the use of parallel lines (occasionally combined with geometric forms along the rim band) and the panels are further distinguished from one another through the insertion of 'lazy S' scrolls or other geometric designs (see the Uxmal and Dzibilchaltún examples in Brainerd [1958: figs. 59a, b] and Smith [1971: figs. 9e, g]). Heavily rectilinear borders appear (instead of the modified geometric forms preferred by Chocholá potters) and each scene is not nearly as isolated as in Chocholá examples. The effort to clearly mark the limits of each panel and distinguish it from the rest of the vessel wall occurs in both ceramic groups, however. Second, the use of incising to create the linear details within the scene does not preclude an effort to differentiate between a background and foreground. In the absence of actual depth, the artist indicated recession through the overlapping of line and the use of blank backgrounds, similar to the spatial techniques found in Chocholá iconography.

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[351] The Provincia Plano Relief type was widespread and can be found in significant numbers at sites like Uxmal and Dzibilchaltún (Brainerd 1958; Smith 1971). While Ronald Bishop's work indicates that this type was exclusively produced in the Balancan-Jonuta corridor, it was widely traded (Dorie Reents-Budet 2010, pers. comm.). Some examples may also demonstrate enough visual variation to suggest regional approaches to the rendition of imagery.

Potters working in the Provincia Plano Relief style also created ceramics that vary slightly from the type as a whole and yet clearly mark the parallel between it and the Chocholá style. In several examples (e.g. fig. 120), the use of slip and incised line connects the vessel with the Provincia Plano Relief manner of image production. The portrayal of a young lord portrait head framed by a (floral and/or starry?) cartouche, however, just as clearly links it to the earlier Chocholá approach to image making, as does the effort to visually divorce the image from the rest of the vessel wall. Even though incised line is the predominant form of decorative technique used, the scribe chose to incorporate a certain amount depth in this case by recessing the background on which the figure rests, much in the way that Chocholá artists carefully created a deeply indented background for their characters. The glyphs that appear on either side of the main figure also recall the Chocholá pattern of glyphic inclusion— *circular* flower cartouches frame the glyphs and each block has a recessed background.

While the allusion to earlier Chocholá attributes seems evident, the artist responsible for this Provincia pot did not try to replicate the older tradition exactly. The text functions as an extension of the scene due to its location in the floral shapes that emerge out of the cartouche frame. Furthermore, the emphasis on incised line as opposed to deeply carved relief clearly contrasts with standard Chocholá techniques. Ultimately, however, the overarching approach exhibited by this and other Provincia Plano Relief or Provincia related pottery types/styles seems to develop out of the standards of image production presented (at least in part) by Chocholá artists.

In a further movement away from the Chocholá style in ceramic development, Terminal Classic Pabellon Molded-Carved ceramics relate to the Provincia Plano-Relief type with fewer attributes comparable to Chocholá production. Unlike the Provincia Plano Relief type, Pabellon vessels were apparently mostly created in southern centers (Werness 2003). They also show up in reduced numbers in the north, however, in slight variations of the standardized vessel forms and associated imagery connected with Guatemala (Werness 2003, 2008).[352] Pabellon potters exclusively employed molds in the

[352] See footnote 355.

creation of imagery and typically only used carving to 'touch-up' the resulting images.[353] Like the Provincia vessels, they used fine orange pastes and reproduced the reclining figure trope frequently (see Werness 2003). Unlike Chocholá craftsmen, Pabellon artists almost always incorporated two scenes on a standardized set of forms including bowls and barrel shaped vessels. Pabellon producers also rarely included hieroglyphic sequences. As in the Provincia examples, however, the image panels are clearly separated from the vessel wall by lines marking the rim and base. Thus, while the Pabellon Molded-Carved type is not directly related to the Chocholá style, it demonstrates a similar interest in the play between recessed and projecting surfaces and, through its relation to the Provincia Plano Relief type, connects with a larger developmental trajectory that begins to privilege carving (and/or molding) at the expense of more painterly traditions.[354] The fact that Pabellons were manufactured in both the north and the south and can be found in large numbers at sites like Altar de Sacrificios and Seibal indicates that while carving and incising was most popular in the north, potters at southern sites were also beginning to emphasize these techniques as they explored new paste technologies.[355]

Some other ceramic types created during the Terminal Classic do more than simply participate in the larger trends I have outlined above. Two examples, one from Calakmul and one from Jaina (figs. 44, 121) demonstrate an even closer relationship to Chocholá production. Both vessels incorporate the molded calabash shape surmounted

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[353] There may be one exception to this general rule at Ceibal (Daniela Triadan 2009, pers. comm.).

[354] I do not mean to say that carving completely replaces polychrome or monochrome production, but rather that the northern interest in polychromes wanes dramatically during the Late and Terminal Classic while southern artists began producing carved ceramics at the elite level in greater numbers during the same time period.

[355] Pabellons demonstrate the implementation of fine orange pastes. The Usumacinta/Pasion drainage seems to be a major production locus for the Pabellon type (Adams 1971; Bishop and Rands 1982), but regional manufacture also occurred in Belize (e.g. the Belize Molded-Carved type that introduces different scene and paste types while using similar forms and techniques) and apparently in the north as well, as a miniature bowl displaying the Mirror Symmetry Scene (only found on barrel shaped vessels in the south) indicates (Awe 1985; Helmke 2000; Werness 2003, 2008).

by a glyphic band. Differences can be seen in the way the ridges of the calabash form are created in these later pieces. While still projecting out from the vessel wall, the ridges are smaller and the projection is not as dramatic as that found in the Chocholá corpus. The closer, tighter spacing also creates a more stylized version of the calabash shape, although not as stylized as that seen in the Chocholá subgroup and in earlier traditions. The Late Classic calabash ceramic form seems to have morphed into a shallower bowl shape in the Terminal Classic and the glyphic sequences do not seem as visually formulaic as those found in the Chocholá Calabash Sub-style. The overarching intent is so similar, however, that were it not for the definite temporal difference, I would be tempted to class these two examples as Chocholá style outliers. The fact that one of them comes from Jaina, a site that probably produced a handful of Chocholá and Chocholá related ceramics (see Chapter 6), furthers this sense of connection.[356] Thus, the Chocholá style calabash-shaped vessels seem to be an intermediary step in a ceramic sequence that moves from the completely stylized vessel forms found in the Middle Classic to the calabash forms found in the Terminal Classic. The Chocholá corpus significantly contains both forms in the Calabash and Stylized Calabash Sub-styles and thus acts as a bridge between the Middle Classic and the Terminal Classic approaches to the natural form.

Of course, the Chocholá manner of presenting imagery is not the only ceramic tradition to develop through time. Many other pictorial practices exist, such as the polychrome scenes that show the 'Holmul Dancers' and come from the Naranjo area of the Petén, or those that incorporate supernaturals and/or geometric designs floating above a black background from the region east of Tikal (see Reents-Budet 1994). The point here is that one small part of Maya ceramic manufacture privileges the carved medium, focuses on a small number of figures and also sets the scene off from the vessel wall concurrent with the use of diagonal or vertical texts that are divorced from the image, etc. Artists also chose calabash forms when they elected not to incorporate imagery.

[356] Admittedly, however, no Calabash Category Chocholá ceramics can be connected with Jaina at this time.

Furthermore, Maya potters as a whole and especially in the north began focusing on carving in the Late and Terminal Classic in opposition to previous polychrome modes of representation. The Chocholá style, in its various forms, functioned as a quintessential manifestation of these different traditions and bridged the transition between the Middle Classic and the Terminal Classic. Transitional aspects are evident when other Chocholá attributes are analyzed from this point of view.

As Brainerd (1958) noted, potters commonly used trickle paint in the beginning stages of slateware production. The Chocholá corpus certainly contains many examples that incorporate post-fire paint. Unlike the fairly standardized use of specific vessel forms and cartouche frames, Chocholá potters were very inconsistent in the ways in which they applied such painted additions. In some cases, for example, the artist only drew geometric forms on the sections of the vessel wall that had not been carved. In others, parts of the image themselves were highlighted. In almost all cases, the craftsman used a monochromatic color palette consisting solely of black. A few pieces, however, seem to play with past polychrome approaches. In one instance (fig. 4), the vessel exhibits traces of stucco painted with Maya blue, which implies the use of a broader color range.[357] Artists only seem to have used other colors when also applying a thin layer of stucco to the uncarved areas of the vessel, however; these additions are unfortunately the most fragile and are now only visible in small patches on a handful of pieces.

As I have demonstrated, stylistic approaches develop through time and morph into temporally and geographically specific variations, which, while distinct, at the same time indicate continuity within particular aesthetic traditions. While each manifestation of the Chocholá style does not seem particularly experimental, the style's temporal position and the wide range of paste types used in its manufacture mark its place as a transitional group. The larger ceramic trends I have outlined above support this position, connecting the corpus with a desire to recall previous image traditions while forecasting later, slateware developments. It also expresses a certain aesthetic rubric that eventually

[357] The Peto vessel (fig. 8) also seems to show traces of stucco painted in Maya blue, (see Danien 2006: fig. C-12).

coalesces into the incised rendition of imagery or stylized-naturalism of form found in later types. At the very least, it marks a point in time in the development of larger stylistic 'laws' governing northern ceramic manufacture, while at the most, it directly influences later image production, as might be the case in the Jaina calabash-shaped vessel just mentioned.

## *Conclusion: Why Chocholá? Why (c.) 700-800 CE?*

The wide range of scribal styles connected with Oxkintok-area production of the Chocholá style reflects Oxkintok's position relative to other Puuc sites during the Late Classic. Before the Late/Terminal Classic Puuc architectural style develops, concurrent with the rise of Uxmal and the Uxmal axis of power including Kabah and Nohpat, Oxkintok proved to be the major power in the region. While Oxkintok's authority remains undisputed, the evidence derived from the analysis of Chocholá ceramics provides a more nuanced view of site hierarchy and interaction. Though other centers certainly made ceramics in (or modifying) the Chocholá style, Oxkintok was the driving force behind the production and distribution of the core Chocholá group. Not only did the site control the manufacture of this particular type of vessel, it also developed three main variations for the style (see Chapters 3, 5, 6).

In order to understand the reasons behind Chocholá production in the north, a consideration of the broad ceramic and socio-cultural/political shifts that precede, occur concurrent with and follow the manufacture of the style must first be developed. At Oxkintok, and in the Puuc region generally, experimentation began occurring at many levels as early as the fifth century (Varela Torrecilla 1998: 34). In the Early and Middle Classic, Oxkintok imagery and texts related to southern developments and a wide-spread interaction sphere connecting the north and south (Varela Torrecilla 1998: 39).[358] This is

[358] An Urita Gubiado Inciso sherd, connected with a Petén-based locus of manufacture, was found at the site, for example. García Campillo (1991: 63) has argued that this

not to say that the northern sites simply followed in the footsteps of their southern neighbors, as indicated by the development of a distinct, northern polychrome tradition, concurrent with the importation of southern polychromes (Varela Torrecilla 1998: 214, 216).

By the end of the Middle Classic period, northern ceramicists began favoring non-polychrome types and the ceramic assemblages from a number of northern sites—most noticeably for my purposes here, Oxkintok, Dzibilchaltún and Jaina—shared similar approaches to creating ceramic alternatives distinct from other regional developments (Varela Torrecilla 1998: 224, 227, 233). The shift in ceramic production continued into the Late Classic. Overlapping with the beginning of the 700-800 CE range during which Chocholá vessels were produced, Oxkintok potters began making more ceramics and started the process of pronounced technical development while using forms reminiscent of earlier periods (Varela Torrecilla 1998: 41). By c. 750 CE, slatewares appeared in large numbers, at which point ceramics began fitting into homogenous groups in contrast to previous production, which Carmen Varela Torrecilla (1998: 41) suggested might be connected with the larger reform of the established political system.

In earlier periods, the site had developed into several major, unconnected groups (López de la Rosa and Velázquez Morlet 1992: 207-211). This has led scholars to suggest that early Oxkintok participated in a segmentary system of government. Around the sixth century, a single *ajaw* title appears on one of the only inscribed monuments associated with this period and García Campillo (1991: 65) has interpreted this evidence as indicating a movement towards greater centralization in the government at the site. Subsequently, beginning by around the eighth century, Oxkintok experienced extensive remodeling and the once disparate groups were linked by a system of newly constructed *sacbes* (López de la Rosa and Velázquez Morlet 1992: 207-211). A single person—**OHL-si-?-TOK'**—is also named in at least three of the most important groups at the site (García Campillo 1991: 66), furthering their interconnectedness at this time. While

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fragment names a person found mentioned on another vessel associated with the Tomb 19 assemblage at Rio Azul.

**OHL-si-?-TOK'** never took the *k'uhul ajaw* title and was often shown in conjunction with other important individuals (including at least two women; see the Palacio Ch'ich', Ah Canul group lintels), he seems to have been connected with different parts of the site to an extent unsurpassed by other dignitaries (García Campillo 1991: 66-67). This period is also associated with the development of a major sculptural program expressed in a stylistically cohesive form, which further supports centralization (García Campillo 1991: 65). Ultimately, the foregoing evidence indicates that Oxkintok experienced a major period of growth linked with the time of Chocholá production and the appearance of an elite figure who, while not called a paramount lord, drove a large part of the sculptural (and presumably architectural and ceramic) expansion at the site and the extension of its territorial domain.[359]

Elite luxury wares exemplified this trend and were clearly differentiated from southern prestige goods in later periods (Varela Torrecilla 1998: 241). The Late Classic was also defined by an effort to maintain some epigraphic and iconographic relationships with southern systems while at the same time developing new ceramic and architectural schemas (Varela Torrecilla 1998: 44). Thus, Oxkintok, as one of the main power centers in the area, can be connected with the desire to develop innovative, distinctive design principles. As the Oxkintok lord began solidifying his power base, he also chose to patronize a style that subtly alluded to longer, firmly rooted traditions.

In this context it is significant that my definition of the Chocholá style centers around a core or 'canonical' group combined with various other subsets (Chapter 3). Subsequent analysis has indicated that many of the vessels in the canonical set and at least one of the subsets—the Calabash Category—can be linked with Oxkintok-area production (Chapters 5, 6).[360] While this correlation is an unintended product of the

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[359] Such developments were probably gradual and began in the Middle Classic. Many Middle Classic Puuc sites embarked upon construction projects, in contrast to the apparent interruption of construction in the Petén (Varela Torrecilla 1998: 44). Such building patterns might explain the subsequent northern effort to develop clearly distinct, though still related, traditions.

[360] Now that the regional dynamics of Chocholá production are better understood, another way of defining the style would be to limit its extent solely to Oxkintok production. The

initial stylistic analysis, it reflects the fact that Oxkintok had a major hand in Chocholá production. In fact, the style probably originated under **OHL-si-?-TOK'** who then distributed a number of ceramics throughout the north as a way of building, maintaining and strengthening sociopolitical and economic alliances. Based on my analysis of provenience and various aspects of geographically related stylistic expression (Chapter 6, see also Chapter 2), the Oxkintok lord(s) chose to solidify his/their relationship with elites at Jaina to the southwest, Tiho (Mérida)/Dzibilchaltún to the northeast, and further to the south and southeast at places like Uxmal, Xcalumkin and the Ticul and Peto regions. At around the time that a number of these areas (like Jaina and Tiho) received ceramics from the production area centered around Oxkintok, they began manufacturing stylistically related vessels, possibly as an attempt to demonstrate their affiliation and status as well as a certain degree of autonomy.

While the Chocholá style itself was relatively short-lived and may even have been connected only with **OHL-si-?-TOK'** and his contemporaries (and possibly their immediate descendents), its place in Maya ceramic development is further reaching. It acted as a highly prestigious elite ware that, through its apparent difference from earlier traditions, marked a major new development in the sociopolitical sphere concurrent with the ascent of **OHL-si-?-TOK'** (see Chapter 2). Many of the hieroglyphic sequences, for example, exhibit particular, regionalized solutions to the dedicatory formula and mark a direct divergence not only from southern ceramic text strings but also from previous and contemporary northern formulae (Chapter 5). Despite these differences and the visual details that at first blush seem to diverge from earlier ceramic approaches, Chocholá iconography falls in line with long lasting iconographic complexes that focus on images of young lords, gods and otherworldly settings (Chapter 4). The sanctification of power and the projection of that message of legitimization occurred not only through the use of

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current data does not allow such a restriction given that many vessels are not archaeologically anchored or at best have only loose provenience. Furthermore, while Oxkintok does act as the driving force, it is not the only place connected with Chocholá manufacture. Eliminating examples like those from Jaina and Tiho would obscure the extended sociopolitical and economic alignments that the style helped uncover, thus providing a more emic perspective (see Chapter 6).

such imagery but also through the demonstration that the elites controlled the resources needed for such ceramic manufacture. Furthermore, Chocholá potters used allusions to the past in various ways (e.g. through the incorporation of forms popular in preceding periods, approaches to the rendition of images, and possibly even archaic references) in order to construct a sense of a lengthy history as well as continuity and the rightful order of things while simultaneously indicating a desire for innovation at both the technical and formal levels.

Thus, a particularly cohesive potting community based in the Oxkintok area created a host of highly refined elite vessels under the patronage of a single lord (or at the most three generations of elites). Only a handful of other scholars have alluded to such a degree of historical specificity. Clemency Coggins (1975), probably due to her mentor Tatiana Proskouriakoff's historical approach, attempted to connect particular ceramic styles with specific dynasties at Tikal. Most Mayanists have, for the most part, failed to follow up on this methodological suggestion. Reents-Budet (1998: 73-74) suggested that particular pottery styles may be connected with political power without tying individual rulers to such pottery movements. Subsequently, Reents-Budet (et al. 2006) worked with other scholars in further examining the Ik' corpus. Their interpretations clearly connected two distinctive stylistic subgroups of polychrome pottery with two consecutive rulers.[361] Houston (David Stuart 2010, pers. comm.; see also Muñoz 2006: 256-264) also recently briefly alluded to such historical connections in conjunction with his work with Héctor Escobedo at Piedras Negras.

Certainly specific Maya lords used elite ceramics much as they did stelae and architectural programs—as tools to solidify and legitimize political power. The stylistic shifts in the monumental record connected with changes in rulers are well attested (e.g. Cash 2005; García Campillo 1991; Spencer 2007; Stuart 2002) and now is the time to begin applying such fine resolution analysis to ancient Maya ceramics. The portability of

[361] As further archaeological investigation occurs, it will be interesting to examine the Chocholá style from this perspective. Do Chocholá vessels provide a corollary example, wherein the development of certain substyles (like the Calabash groups, for instance) may be connected with a succession of rulers?

pots means that they likely expressed and projected sociopolitical messages at a remove from the producer/patron as well as doing so in intimate settings. By considering vessels as tools in an extended sociopolitical/economic framework, as I have done here, scholars can reach new levels of understanding regarding elite interactions at the micro-regional level of individual exchange. How can such a historical approach affect our understanding of the Dos Pilas-Aguateca ceramic exchange mentioned by Foias and Bishop (2007: 230)? The temporally extended use of certain ceramic traditions, like the Buenavista del Cayo material (see Reents-Budet et al. 2000), by multiple rulers in a line of succession also carries important implications from this perspective regarding efforts to maintain continuity, order and a connection with past rulers.[362]

Such historical perspectives encourage not only a fine-grained analysis of a particular temporal moment, they also facilitate subsequent investigation into larger contextual issues. The influence Chocholá potters exerted did not just affect the sociopolitical atmosphere of their time, for example, but also seems to have had some impact on later ceramic traditions like those seen in the calabash vessel forms that developed in the Terminal Classic as well as the Provincia Plano Relief and, to a lesser extent, the Pabellon Molded-Carved types. While in some instances there seems to be a relatively direct sequence of development, in many cases these influences, as is usually true with such a loaded word like 'influence,' are more general and speak to larger attitudes that govern ceramic manufacture.

As with any project of this nature, many questions remain. Certain hieroglyphs, like the Initial Sign, still need to be deciphered, for example. Once this sign and others like it are better understood, scholars can then return to the Chocholá style. Instead of simply noting the regionalized choice of an **AJAW** component, as I have done here, they might then be able to suggest more concrete reasons motivating these area-specific choices. Additionally, as more texts become available, the titles and proper names that occasionally appear should be continually 'crosschecked' against the Chocholá corpus;

[362] Please see my discussion of both Foias and Bishop's (2007) and Reents-Budet (et al. 2000) and colleague's work at the end of Chapter 1.

correlations will undoubtedly expand the sociopolitical atmosphere within which the style is understood. The iconographic selections also bear further examination on a number of different levels. As the ceramic sequences attached to specific sites grows, certain visual trends will become apparent. Furthermore, an even more nuanced understanding of the individual iconographic programs developed on each pot will surely affect the specific message sent by that vessel. Now that the overarching system of legitimization indicated by repetitive aspects of Chocholá imagery has been outlined and some geographical awareness of exchange has been developed, scholars can begin looking more closely at such vessels as more individualized forms of communication.

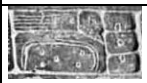
Many larger concerns also require further examination. Can the kinds of sociopolitical interaction between Jaina, Oxkintok, Xcalumkin and Tiho (Mérida), etc., as indicated by the Chocholá style, be detected in the monumental/archaeological records? Additionally, many uncertainties still remain regarding the exact chronology not only of the Chocholá style, but also of the ceramic sequences at specific sites (and indeed the temporal development of the sites themselves). As archaeological activity continues in the north, greater awareness of individual site development and the associated ceramic sequences will be reached. Hopefully too, such excavations will continue to yield additional Chocholá vessels and pots in related styles. Better precision in all of these areas will result in greater specificity regarding the stylistic trends and shifts I have suggested here.

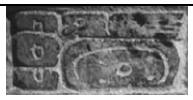
Despite the continual existence of such issues as temporal imprecision, etc., I have made several significant contributions to our understanding of the Chocholá style as well as northern interaction and exchange. First, I have developed a clear rubric for defining the style and have drawn attention not only to its aesthetic complexity but also to its intellectual display of imagery and text. In examining provenience, both general and archaeologically verifiable, I have shown that these vessels were used as commodities tying together sites like those named above. In regions that lack a plethora of hieroglyphic texts outlining elite power-based interaction, an understanding of the ceramic and stylistic exchange that occurred anciently between sites is of paramount

importance in trying to reconstruct inter-site elite relationships. Perhaps most importantly, I have developed a methodological approach that uses both archaeologically provenienced and looted ceramics as a way of looking at particular elite interaction and exchange in areas that lack a massive body of hieroglyphic inscriptions. Ultimately, I have been able to demonstrate that Chocholá potters created an idiosyncratic style that involved intellectual play in the reanalysis of standardized glyphic and iconographic forms while also drawing from long-lasting artistic traditions. The elevated nature of such developments certainly reflected well not only on Oxkintok, the prime producer of the style, but also on those sites/individuals that received Chocholá pots and/or chose to make their own variations.

## Tables

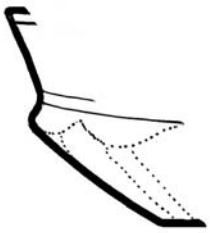
Table 1. Select Chocholá Dedicatory Formulae, arranged for structural comparison. Created by Maline Werness.

| Fig. | Scene Type | lu<br>carved* | u-ja-yi<br>his cup | yu-k'i-bi<br>his vessel | Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23 | Deity |  |  |  | Kerr Maya Vase Database: K8939 |
| 26 | Young Lord, Supernatural |  |  |  | Kerr Maya Vase Database: K6998 |
| 33 | Ballplayer | |  |  | Kerr Maya Vase Database: K4684 |
| 31 | Ballplayer** |  |  |  | Kerr Maya Vase Database: K4925 |
| 107 | Blank (?) |  |  |  | Kerr Maya Vase Database: K3199 |
| 108 | Molded Calabash Sub-Style |  |  |  | Kerr Maya Vase Database: K4378 |
| 45 | Young Lord; Monkey Scribe |  |  |  | Kerr Maya Vase Database: K8740 |
| 43 | Young Lord and Dwarf | |  |  | Kerr Maya Vase Database: K4542 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 38 | Young Lord |  |  |  | Grube and Gaida 2006: cat. 27 |
| | diagonal text | |  |  | |
| | | | | | |
| 40 | Molded Calabash Sub-Style |  |  |  | Photograph provided by David Stuart |
| | | | | | |
| 50 | Blank | |  |  | Photograph provided by David Stuart |
| | | | | | |
| 41 | Stylized Calabash Sub-Style |  |  |  | Drawing provided by Carlos Pallan |
| | | | | | |
| 109 | Molded Calabash Sub-Style | |  |  | Photograph provided by David Stuart |

*Full phrase: **yu-**[undeciphered bat head] **lu** referring to the carving of the vessel
**Unusual reading order, corrected for table

Table 2. Representative selection of Chocholá vessel forms. Created by Maline Werness

| **Standard Forms, Vessels with Iconography** | **Standard Forms, Calabash** | **Unusual Forms, Vessels with Iconography** |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |
| See fig. 9 | See fig. 11 | See fig. 12 |
| | | |
|  |  |  |
| See fig. 37 | See fig. 43 | See fig. 27 |
| | | |
|  |  |  |
| See fig. 38 | See fig. 112 | See fig. 40 |
| | | |
|  | | |
| See fig. 20 | | |

## Figures*


Figure 1. Map of the Maya Area. Drawing by Maline Werness, modified from Martin and Grube (2000: 10).

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* Images are subject to copyright and cannot be used without the express written consent of the copyright holder.


Figure 2. Chocholá Style Ceramic, GI, dedicatory formula names Tiho. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K4333.


Figure 3. Chocholá Style Ceramic, note the trickle (post-fire) painted designs. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K4547.

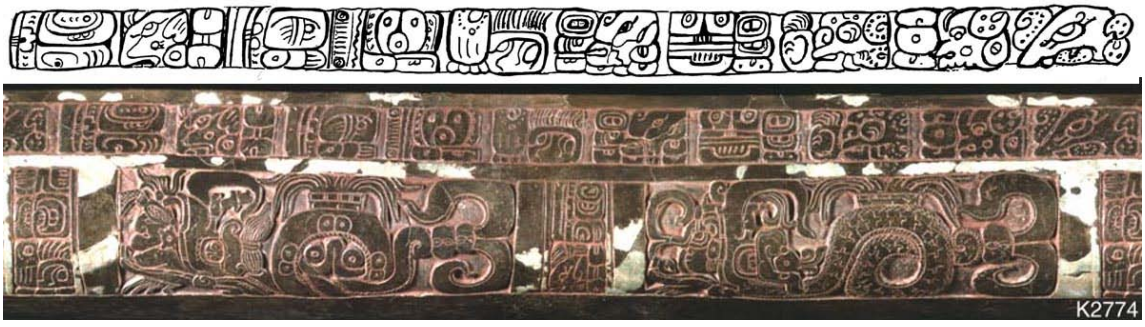



Figure 4. Chocholá Style Ceramic, note the post-figure stucco additions. Images © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K2774.

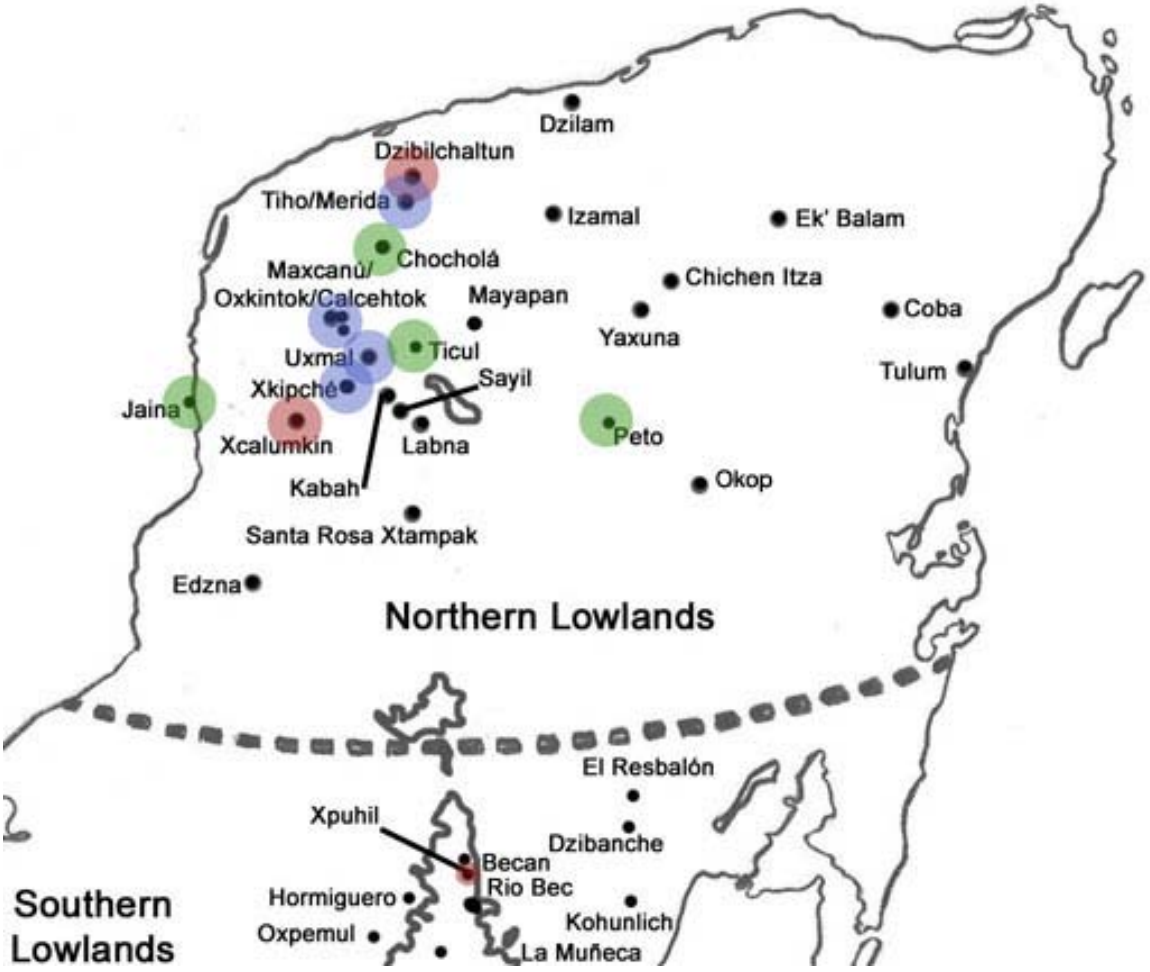



Figure 5. Map of the Yucatán Peninsula, showing areas connected with Chocholá Style Ceramic finds. Drawing by Maline Werness, modified from Martin and Grube (2000: 10).

Color coded based on source:
Blue—Depositional information from sanctioned excavations;
Red—Possible but unverified depositional information from sanctioned but unpublished excavations; possible but fragmentary archaeological examples
Green—General provenience based on early eyewitness accounts or otherwise unverifiable reports.

Figure 6. Bone Implement, Tomb 8, Oxkintok. Drawing by Maline Werness after Schmidt 2004: 33.

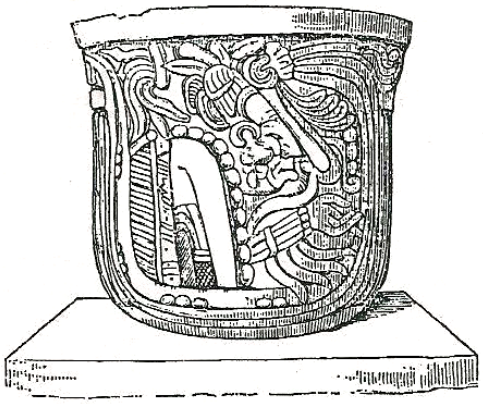



Figure 7. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust, Ticul. Public Domain Image from Stephens 1843: 275.

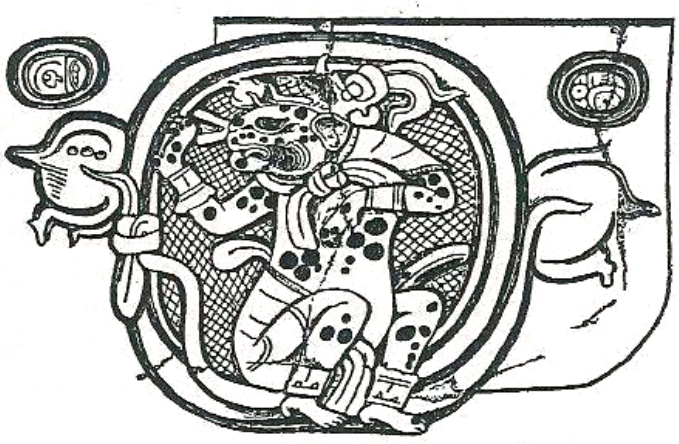
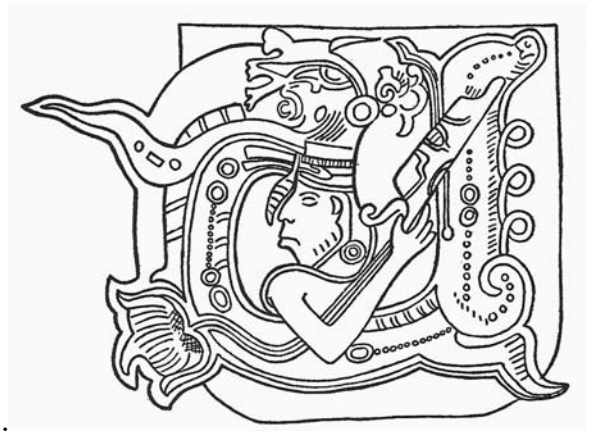


Figure 8. Chocholá Style Vessel, Waterlily Jaguar, Peto. Public Domain Image from Spinden 1913: fig. 185.

A. 

B. 

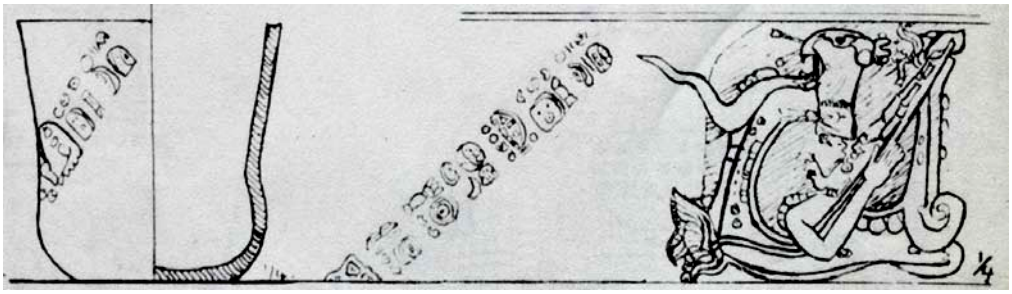
C. 

Figure 9. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust. A. Calcehtok. Public Domain Image from Spinden 1913: fig. 186. B. Drawing of text by Maline Werness after Danien 2006: G7. C. Public Domain Image from Vaillant 1927: fig. 291.

Figure 10 Chocholá Style Vessel, lone lord. Public Domain Image from Spinden 1913: fig. 187.

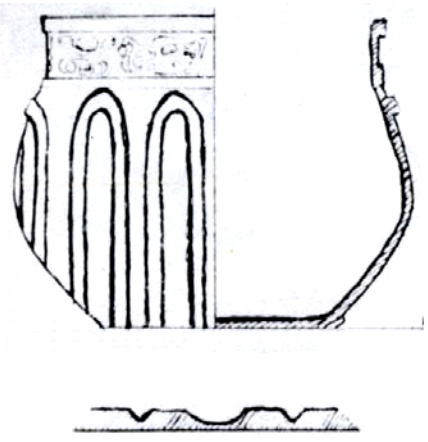


Figure 11. Chocholá Style Vessel, stylized calabash shape. Public Domain Image from Vaillant 1927: 283.

Figure 12. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust, fine slateware from Uxmal. Public Domain Image from Vaillant 1927: 310.

Figure 13. Chocholá Style Vessel (?), serpent, engraved redware from Jaina. Public Domain Image from Vaillant 1927: 311.

Figure 14. Chocholá Style Vessel, Lord, engraved redware from Ticul. Public Domain Image from Vaillant 1927: 313.

A.  B. 

Figure 15. Precolumbian. *Vessel with Ceremonial Scene*, c. 690-750. Mexico, Campeche, reputedly from Jaina Island, Maya culture. Late Classic Period (A.D. 600-900). Carved ceramic with traces of pigment. 8 1/8 x 6-7/8 in. diameter (20.7 x 17.3 cm. diameter). A. Image © Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas (Apx 1974.04). B. Image © Justin Kerr (see also Coe 1973: cat. 53).

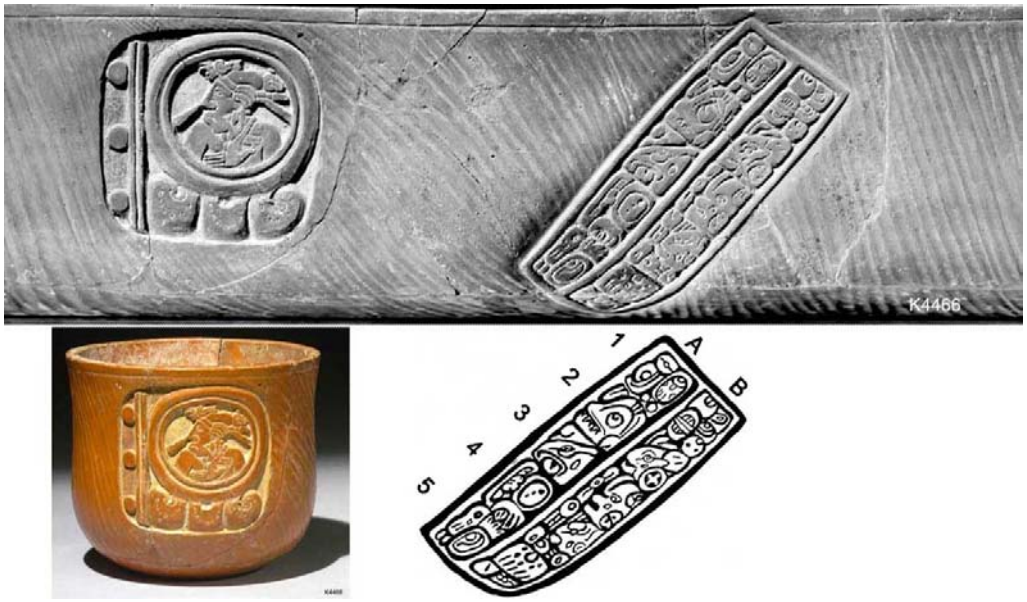



Figure 16. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust, calendrical. Images © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K4466 (see also Coe 1973: cat. 65).

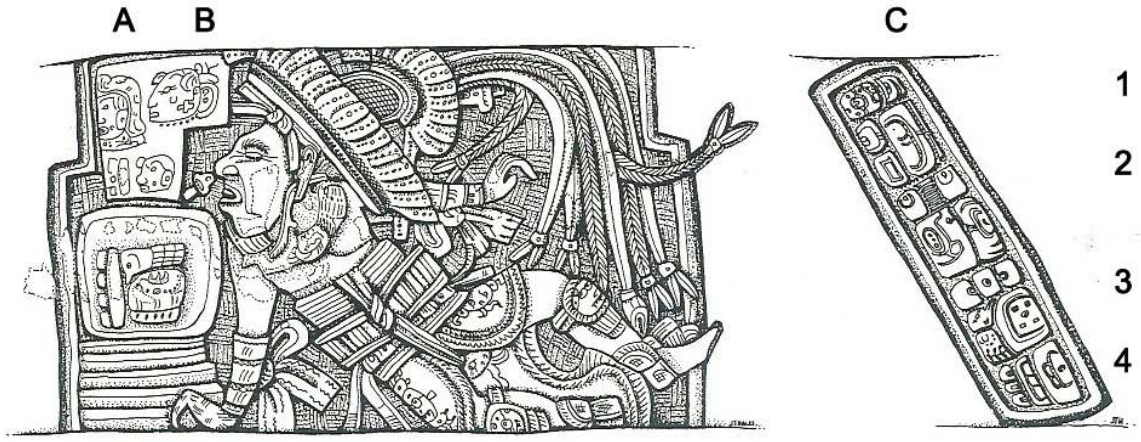



Figure 17. Chocholá Style Vessel, ballplayer, caption names OHL-si-?-TOK' from Oxkintok. Drawing provided by Carolyn Tate (see also Tate 1984: fig. 12).


Figure 18. Chocholá Style Vessel, anthropomorphized harpy eagles, diagonal text names OHL-si-?-TOK' from Oxkintok. Images © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K4931 (see also Tate 1984: fig. 15).


Figure 19. Chocholá Style Vessel, serpent. Images © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K3115 (see also Tate 1985: fig. 7).

Figure 20. Chocholá Style Vessel, God L. Images © Justin Kerr (see also Coe 1973: cat. 56).


Figure 21. Chocholá Style Vessel, conference, Maxcanú area. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K5110 (see also Coe 1973: cat. 58).


Figure 22. Chocholá Style Vessel, heron, Chocholá area. Images © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K4467 (see also Coe 1973: cat. 63).


Figure 23. Chocholá Style Vessel, jaguar supernatural. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K9178.


Figure 24. Chocholá Style Vessel, GI. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K8939 (see also Tate 1985: fig. 6).

Figure 25. Chocholá Style Vessel, ballplayer. Drawing provided by Carolyn Tate (see also Tate 1985: fig. 13).

Figure 26. Chocholá Style Vessel, ballplayer. Drawing provided by Carolyn Tate (see also Tate 1985: fig. 14).


Figure 27. Chocholá Style Vessel, young lord and supernatural. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K6998 (see also Coe 1973: cat. 73).

Figure 28. Carved vessel, Copán. Drawing by Maline Werness after Longyear 1952: 110b, b'.

Figure 29. Chocholá Style Vessel, lone lord. University of Texas, Austin Department of Art and Art History collections, photographs provided by David Stuart with permission of Steve Bourget.

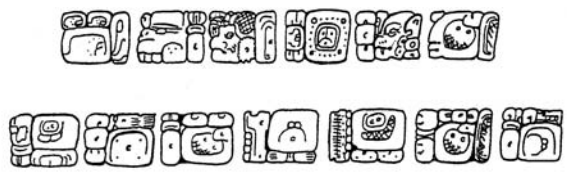
A.  B. 

Figure 30. Chocholá Style Vessel, molded calabash shape. A. Drawing by Judith Strupp Green. B. Photograph courtesy of the San Diego Museum of Man. All Images © San Diego Museum of Man (see also Green 1997: figs. 1, 3).

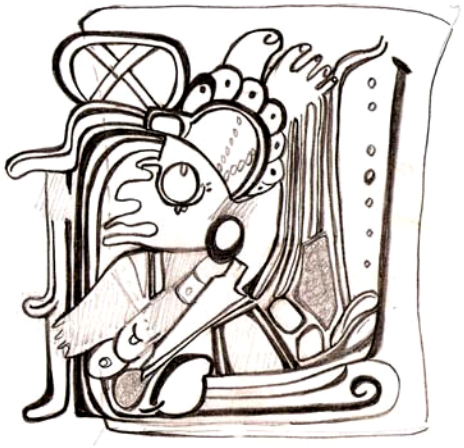


Figure 31. Chocholá Style Vessel, K'awiil, from Burial 10 on Periférico Cholul near Tiho/Mérida. Drawing by Maline Werness, permission of CRY—INAH (see also Pool Cab 1997: 59, 105-106 and 146).


Figure 32. Chocholá Style Vessel, multiple figures, possibly deities. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K4022.

*u jaay y-uk'ib*


Figure 33. Chocholá Style Vessel, ballplayer. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K4925.

A.  B. 

Figure 34. A. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust, Maxcanú area. Images © Justin Kerr (see also Coe 1973: cat. 59). B. Drawing of dedicatory inscription by Maline Werness after Coe 1973: cat 59.


Figure 35. Chocholá Style Vessel, ballplayer. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K4684.

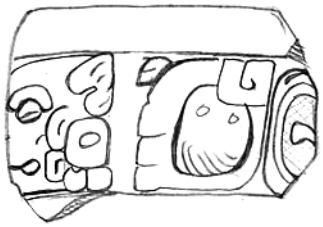


Figure 36. Chocholá Style Vessel sherd from Xkipché. Drawing by Maline Werness, permission of CRY—INAH (see also Vallo 2000: tafel 21.7)

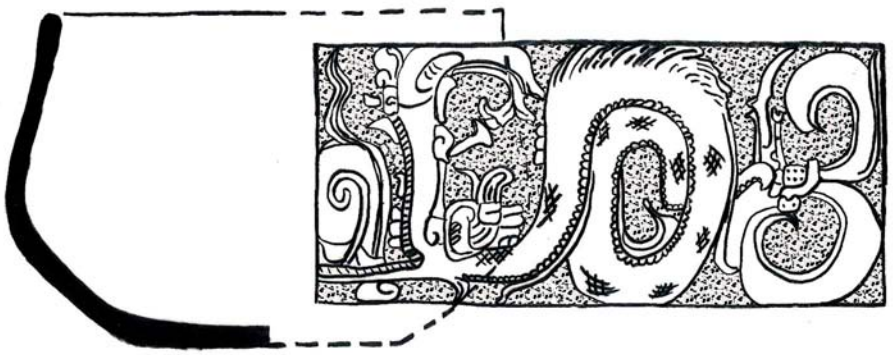


Figure 37. Chocholá Style Vessel, serpent from Oxkintok. Drawing by Maline Werness after Schmidt 2004: 33.

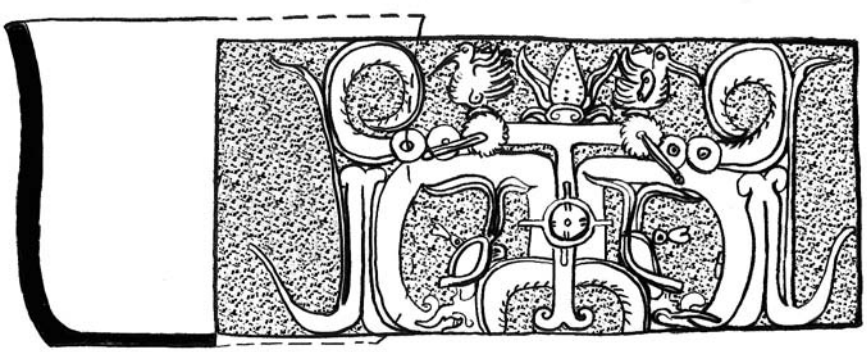


Figure 38. Chocholá Style Vessel, tree and miscellaneous animals from Oxkintok. Drawing by Maline Werness after Schmidt 2004: 33.


Figure 39. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K4463.

Figure 40. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust. Images © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin - Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Ethnologisches Museum. Drawing by Nikolai Grube, photographs by Claudia Obrocki (see also Grube and Gaida 2006: cat. 27-27.4).

Figure 41. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust. Images © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin - Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Ethnologisches Museum. Drawing by Nikolai Grube, photographs by Martin Franken (see also Grube and Gaida 2006: cat. 28-28.2.

Figure 42. Chocholá Style Vessel, molded calabash shape. Photographed by George Stuart in a private collection, photographs provided by David Stuart.

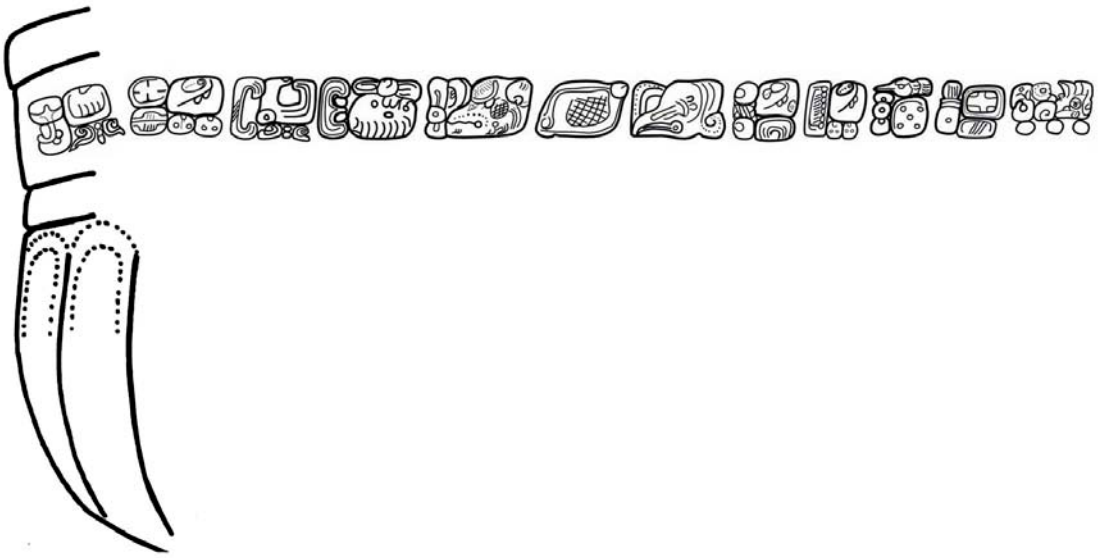


Figure 43. Chocholá Style Vessel, stylized calabash shape. Drawing of text provided by Carlos Pallán Gayol, drawing of vessel shape by Maline Werness after Pallán Gayol 2006: fig. 2.1.1.

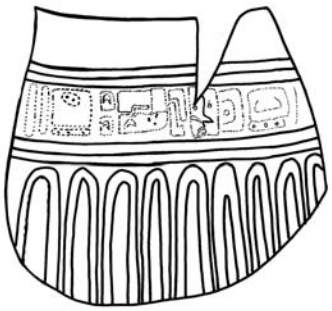


Figure 44. Terminal Classic calabash shaped vessel from Calakmul. Drawing by Maline Werness, permission of CRY—INAH.


Figure 45. Chocholá Style Vessel, conference scene, Chocholá area. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K4542 (see also Coe 1973: cat. 73).


Figure 46. Polychrome Ceramic, Petén area. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K680.


Figure 47. Chocholá Style Vessel, young lord and supernatural. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K8740.

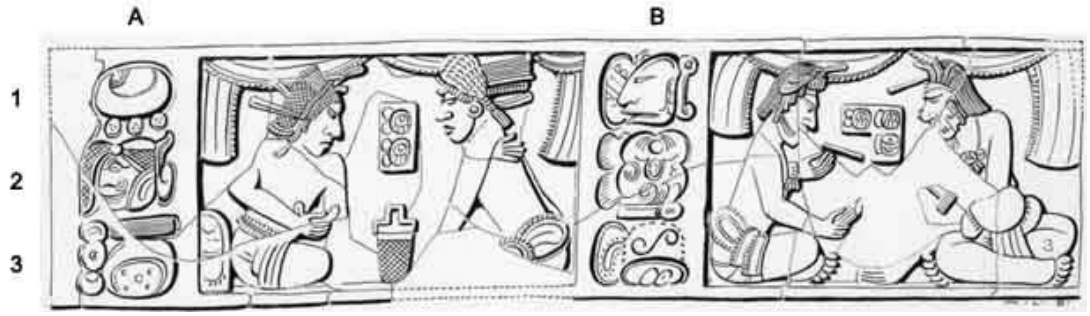



Figure 48. Chocholá Style Vessel, conference scene. Drawing by M. Louise Baker, image held in the Archives of the University of Pennsylvania Museum, courtesy of Elin Danien (see also Danien 2006: fig. M-5).


Figure 49. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust, calendrical. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K8853.

Figure 50. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust. Photograph courtesy of, Sotheby's, Inc. © 2005 (Sale N08095: Lot 299).

Figure 51. Chocholá Style Vessel, stylized calabash shape. Drawing by Maline Werness after Schmidt, de la Garza and Nalda 1998: cat. 440.

Figure 52. Chocholá Style Vessel, smooth walls. Photographed by George Stuart in a private collection, photograph provided by David Stuart.

Figure 53. Chocholá Style Vessel(?) lone lord. Drawing by Maline Werness after Schmidt, de la Garza And Nalda 1988: fig. 361.


Figure 54. Chocholá Style Vessel, God L. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K4924.

Figure 55. Carved Ceramic. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K196 (see also Coe 1973: cat. 66).

Figure 56. Carved Ceramic with wood grain finish. Image © Gardiner Museum (see also Grube 2001: fig. 398).


Figure 57. Incised Ceramic from Xcalumkin. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K8017.


Figure 58. Carved Ceramic. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K5188.


Figure 59. Chocholá Style Vessel, serpents. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K4956 (see also Tate 1985: fig. 2).


Figure 60. Chocholá Style Vessel, dwarf supernatural. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K7146 (see also Tate 1985: fig. 3).

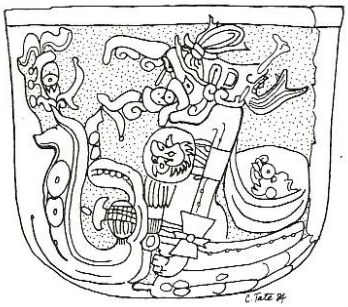


Figure 61. Chocholá Style Vessel, bound supernatural. Drawing provided by Carolyn Tate (see also Tate 1985: fig. 4).

Figure 62. Chocholá Style Vessel, paddler deity. Drawing provided by Carolyn Tate (see also Tate 1985: fig. 5).

A. 

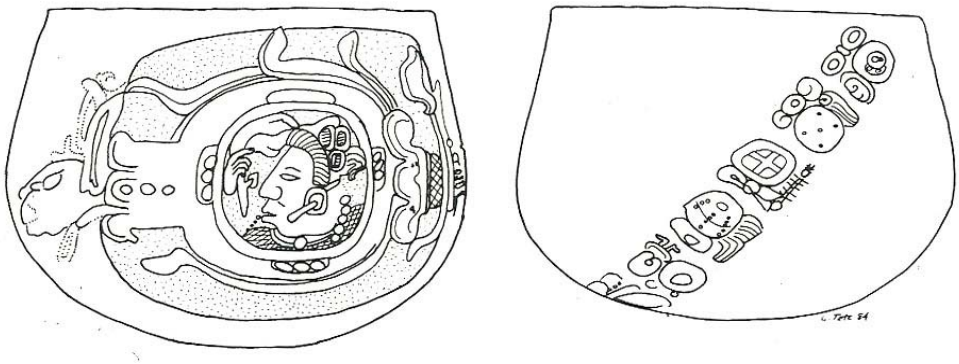
B. 

Figure 63. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust. A. Image courtesy of Saint Louis Art Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Pulitzer Jr. B. Drawing provided by Carolyn Tate (see also Tate 1985: fig. 8).

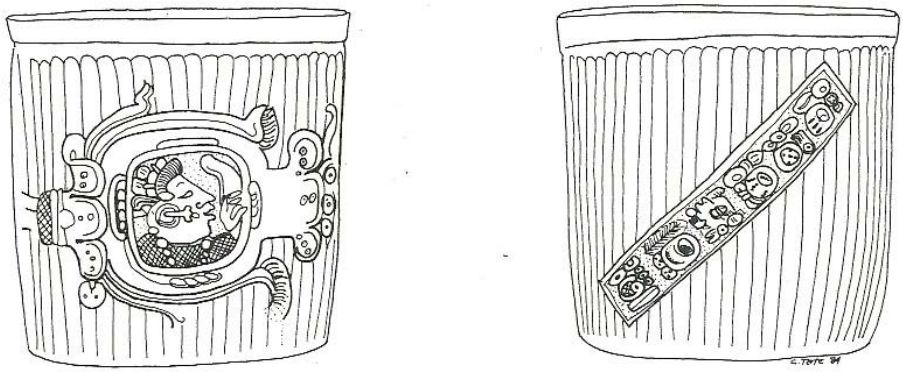


Figure 64. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust. Drawing provided by Carolyn Tate (see also Tate 1985: fig. 9).

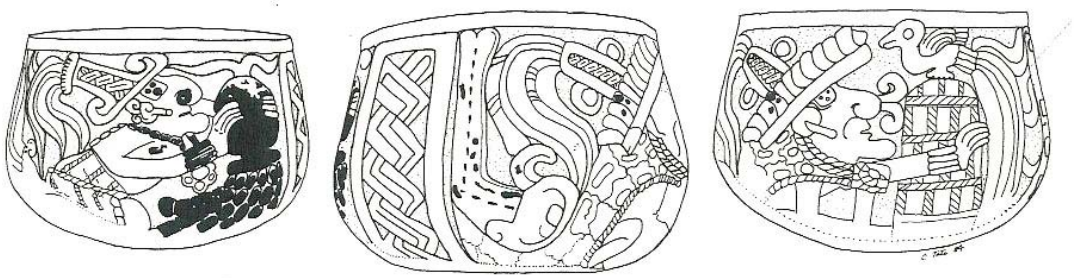


Figure 65. Chocholá Style Vessel, God L. Drawing provided by Carolyn Tate (see also Tate 1985: fig. 10).

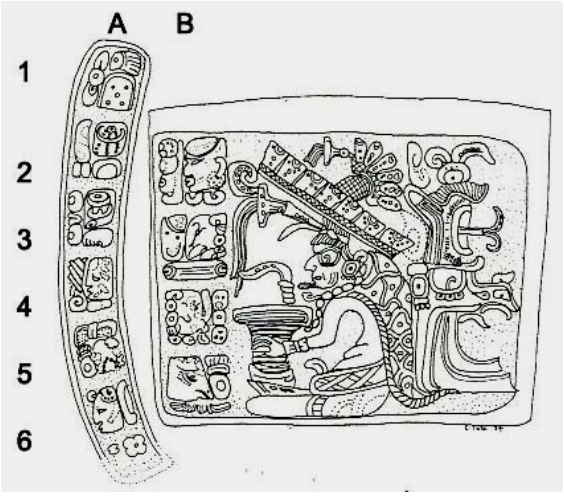



Figure 66. Chocholá Style Vessel, GI. Drawing provided by Carolyn Tate (see also Tate 1985: fig. 11).

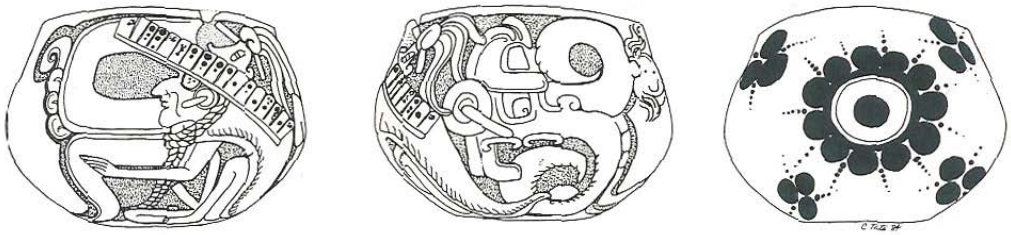


Figure 67. Chocholá Style Vessel, God L with God K. Drawing provided by Carolyn Tate (see also Tate 1985: fig. 16).

Figure 68. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust. Image © Justin Kerr (see also Coe 1973: cat. 60).

Figure 69. Chocholá Style Vessel. isolated bust. Photograph Courtesy of, Sotheby's Inc. © 1996 (Sale 6846: Lot 350).

Figure 70. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated isolated bust. Photograph Courtesy of Sotheby's, Inc. © 1996 (Sale 6846: Lot 351[a]).

A.  B. 

Figure 71. Late Classic Maya, Chocholá Style, Yucatán or Campeche, Mexico. Carved Vessel Depicting a Lord Wearing a Water-Lily Headdress. A.D. 600-800. Ceramic and pigment. H. 15.2 cm. A. Image © The Art Institute of Chicago, Bertha Evans Brown Fund, (accession number 1969.241). B. Image © Justin Kerr (see also Coe 1973: cat. 61).


Figure 72. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K8871.

Figure 73. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust. Photograph Courtesy of Sotheby's, Inc. © 2004 (Sale N08029: Lot 295).

Figure 74. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust. Photograph Courtesy of Sotheby's, Inc. © 2004 (Sale N08029: Lot 297).

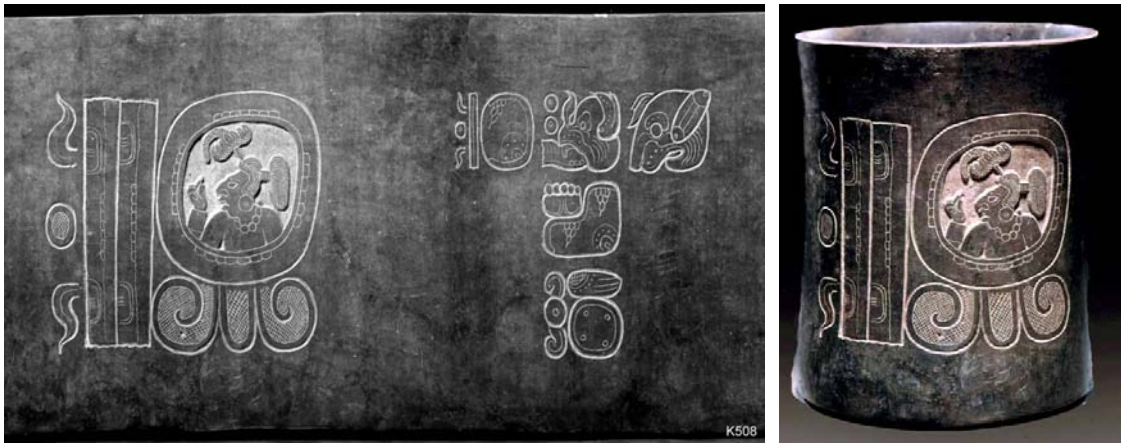



Figure 75. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust, calendrical. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K508 (see also Coe 1977: 99, 100).

Figure 76. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust, calendrical. Photographs Courtesy of Sotheby's, Inc. © 1998 (Sale 7138: Lot 150).

Figure 77. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust, calendrical. Photograph Courtesy of Sotheby's, Inc. © 1998 (Sale 7138: Lot 149).

Figure 78. Carved/Molded Vessel. Fair Use Image (current owner/ location unknown), from Robicsek 1975: Plate 64.

Figure 79. Chocholá Style Vessel, lone lord. Images © Justin Kerr (see also Coe 1973: cat. 54).


Figure 80. Chocholá Style Vessel, lone lord. Images © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K5839.


Figure 81. Chocholá Style Vessel, lone lord. Images © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K8256.

Figure 82. Maya Chocholá Style, cup carved with seated priests, earthenware, 14 x 14.6cm. Mid-20th Century. Image courtesy of Saint Louis Art Museum, Gift of Morton D. May (see also Parsons 1980: cat. 293).


Figure 83. Chocholá Style Vessel, lone lord. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K4477.


Figure 84. Chocholá Style Vessel, ritual deer hunt. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: 4336.

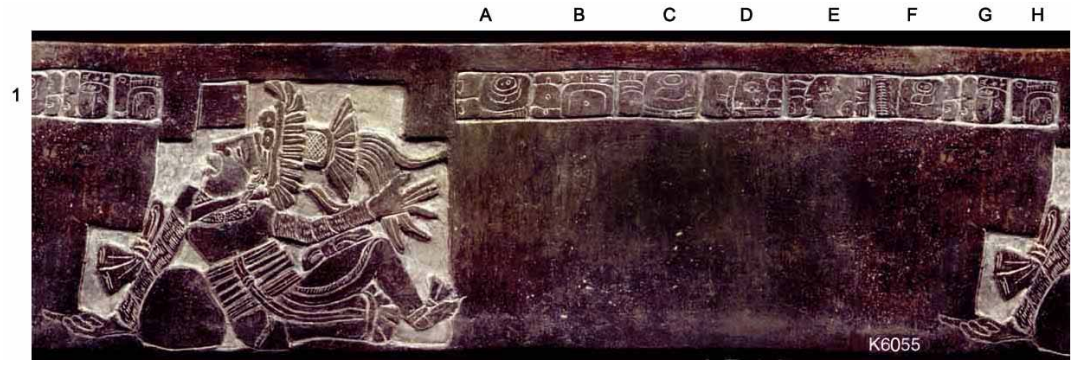



Figure 85. Chocholá Style Vessel, ballplayer. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K6055.

Figure 86. *Vessel with Ballplayer*. Mexico, Yucátan, Maya (Chocholá) style (250-900), c. 600-1000. Earthenware, pigment, 18.10 x 15.6 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James C. Gruener (1990.180).


Figure 87. Chocholá Style Vessel, ballplayer. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K5206.


Figure 88. Chocholá Style Vessel, God L. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K514.


Figure 89. Carved Ceramic. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K5190.


Figure 90. Chocholá Style Vessel, God L. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K6447.

Figure 91. Chocholá Style Vessel, God L. Fair Use Image, current owner/location unknown; likely photographed by either Marc Gaede or John Taylor (permission secured from both).

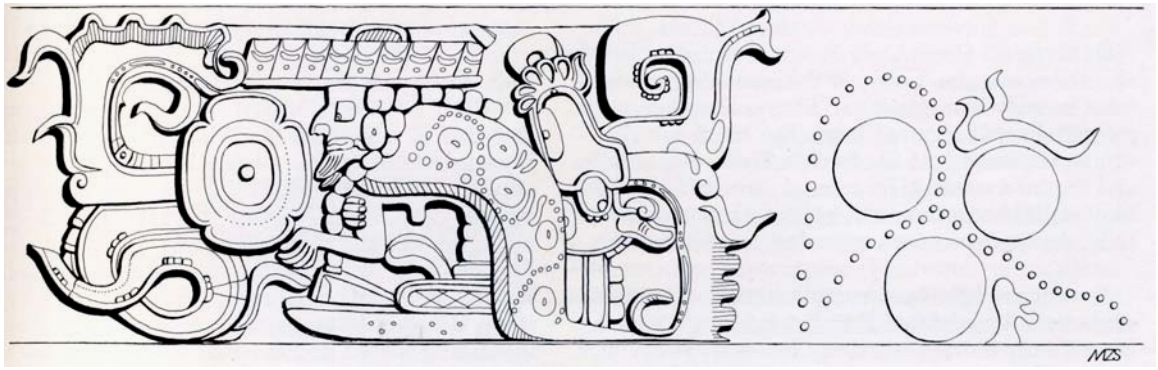


Figure 92. Chocholá Style Vessel, God L. Image from *The Smoking Gods* by Francis Robicsek (fig.189). Copyright © 1978 by the University of Oklahoma Press, Norman. Reprinted by permission of the publisher. All Rights Reserved.

Figure 93. Ancient Maya Carved Vessel (H: 11.5cm.), Milwaukee Public Museum (cat.no. 53989; see also Parsons 1974: fig. 188).


Figure 94. Chocholá Style Vessel, God K. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K4478.

Figure 95. Chocholá Style Vessel, disembodied head. Fair Use Image, current owner/location unknown; likely photographed by either Marc Gaede or John Taylor (permission secured from both).


Figure 96. Carved Ceramic, disembodied head. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K1119.

Figure 97. Chocholá Style Vessel with aquatic creature and deity head. Earthenware, 10.8 x 15.2 x 15.2 cm. Saint Louis Art Museum, Gift of Morton D. May (341:1978; see also Parsons 1980: 314).


Figure 98. Chocholá Style Vessel, serpent. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K5205.

Figure 99. Chocholá Style Vessel, serpent. Fair Use Image, current owner/location unknown; likely photographed by either Marc Gaede or John Taylor (permission secured from both).

Figure 100. Chocholá Style Vessel, serpent. Photograph Courtesy of Sotheby's, Inc. © 2003 (Sale N07902: Lot 303).

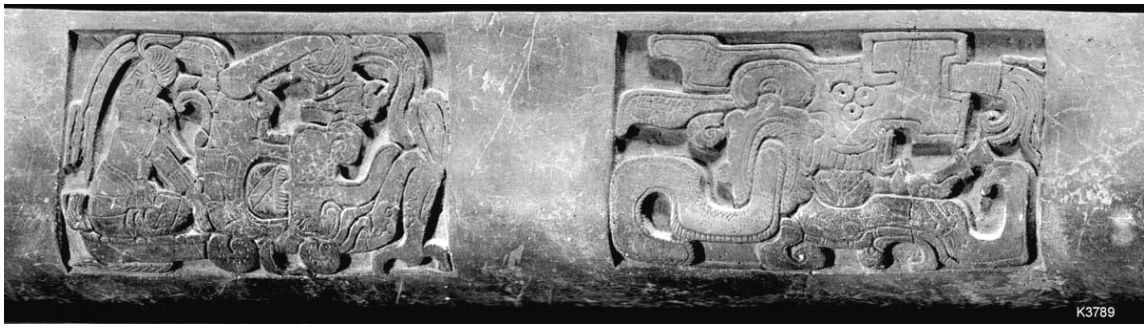



Figure 101. Chocholá Style Vessel, serpent. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K3789.

Figure 102. Chocholá Style Vessel, paddler deity. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K954.

Figure 103. Chocholá Style Vessel, deities. Images © Justin Kerr (see also Coe 1973: cat. 64).


Figure 104. Chocholá Style Vessel, supernaturals. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K9092.


Figure 105. Chocholá Style Vessel, animal supernaturals. Image © Justin Kerr (see also Coe 1982: fig. 29).

Figure 106. Chocholá Style Vessel, jaguar supernatural. Images © Justin Kerr (see also Coe 1973: cat. 67).


Figure 107. Chocholá Style Vessel, feline supernatural. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K5189.


Figure 108. Chocholá Style Vessel. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K3199.


Figure 109. Chocholá Style Vessel, calabash shape. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K4378.

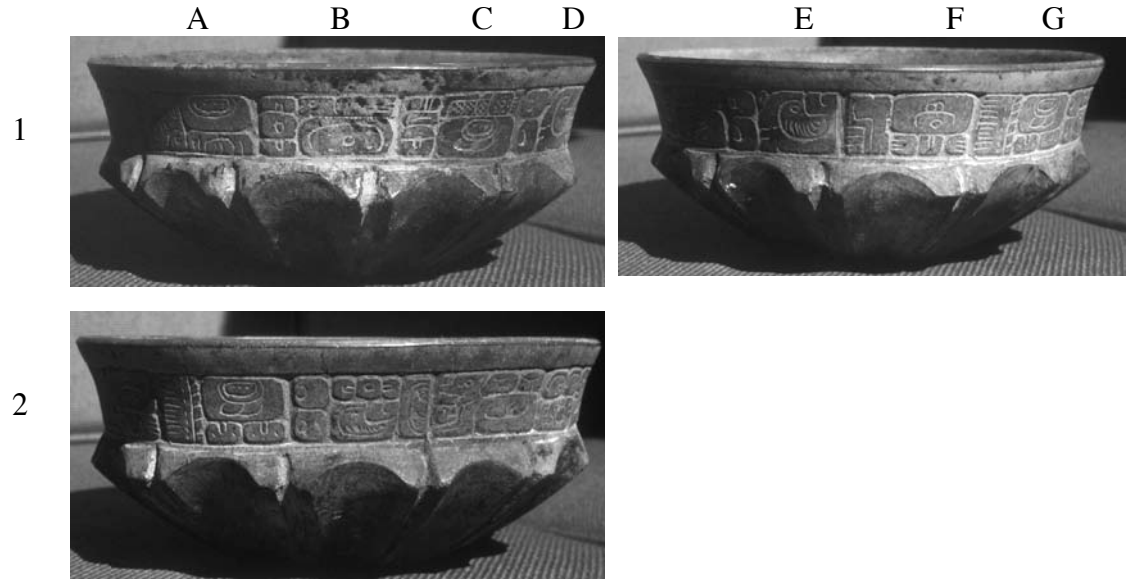



Figure 110. Chocholá Style Vessel, calabash shape. Photographed by George Stuart in a private collection, photographs provided by David Stuart.


Figure 111. Chocholá Style Vessel. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K4930.

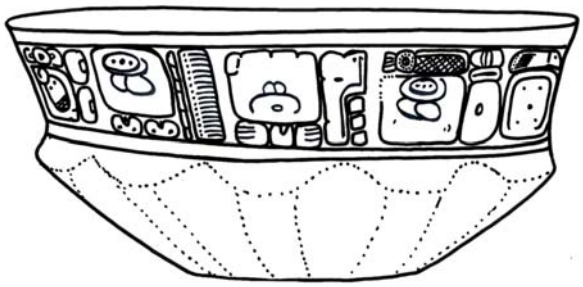


Figure 112. Chocholá Style Vessel, calabash shape. Drawing by Maline Werness after Schmidt, de la Garza and Nalda 1998: fig. 442.

Figure 113. Chocholá Style Vessel, lone lord. Photograph Courtesy of Sotheby's, Inc. © 1996 (Sale 6846: Lot 351(b).

Figure 114. Vessel with Incised Glyphs. Courtesy of the Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University (1991.2.95). Photo by Michael McKelvey.

Figure 115. Chocholá Style Vessel (?). Photograph Courtesy of Sotheby's, Inc. © 2004 (Sale: Lot 290).

Figure 116. Chocholá Style Vessel, isolated bust. From Grube 2000: 435, courtesy of Henri Stielin.

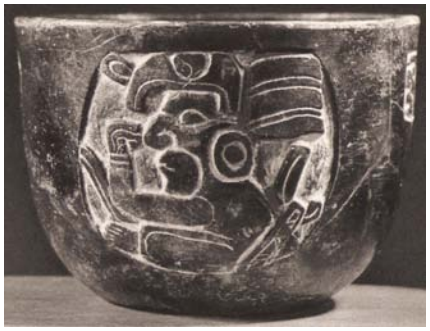


Figure 117. Chocholá Style Vessel, lone lord. Fair Use Image from Kidder, Chinchilla and Goldbert 1959: fig. 64.


Figure 118. Carved limestone bowl, Early Classic. Image © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K4331.

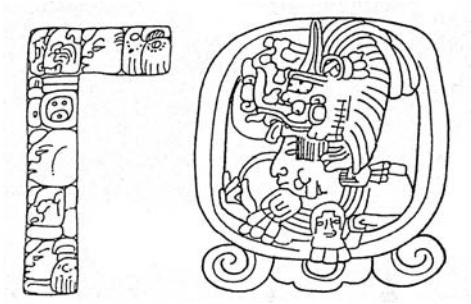


Figure 119. Carved Ceramic. Drawing provided by David Stuart.


Figure 120. Carved Ceramic, Provincia Plano Relief (?). Images © Justin Kerr, Kerr Database: K8757.

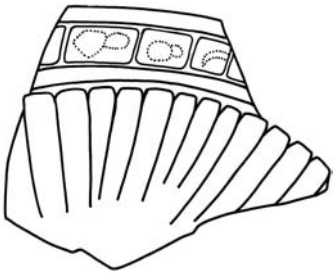


Figure 121. Carved Ceramic, Terminal Classic, from Jaina. Drawing by Maline Werness, permission of CRY—INAH.

## Appendix A:
## Abbreviations and Terms

Arqlgas.:
: Arqueologas (female archaeologists)

Ceramoteca:
: Ceramic warehouse, specifically the Ceramoteca at CRY—INAH, Mérida, unless otherwise noted. Each INAH centro has a ceramic storage area dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of characteristic ceramic type collections associated with specific sites under its purview.

CRY—INAH:
: Centro Regional Yucatán, INAH. Offices located in Mérida, Yucatán (including the Ceramoteca)

DRPMZA—INAH:
: Dirección de Registro Público de Monumentos y Zonas Arqueológicas—INAH

FAMSI
: Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, Inc. (www.famsi.org)

INAH
: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia

Palacio Cantón:
: Museo Regional de Yucatán, Palacio Cantón, Mérida

SLAM
: Saint Louis Art Museum

**Appendix B**
**Summery of Chocholá Data**

Chronology:

Late Classic
8th century
Beginning c. 700 CE (c. 713 CE?)
Lasting at least until 750 CE, possibly longer (i.e. c. 800 CE)

Ceramic classifications:

Thin slateware tradition
Probably crosscuts types and varieties in the type-variety classification system (e.g. plumbate)

Possible ceramic types:

Pocyaxum Composite, Habin Gubiado-Inciso-Chocholá molded variety (Xkipché)
Copo Complex, Copo Sphere, Dzibilchaltún Black Ware, Dzityá Black—Chocholá Molded variety (Dzibilchaltún)
Okinal facet, Dzityá Black-Chocholá Molded Variety (Tiho/Periférico-Cholul)
Plumbate (?) (unprovenienced vessel)

Sites with verifiable Chocholá ceramics:

Tiho/Periférico-Cholul (?)
Oxkintok
Xkipché

Possible sites/modern locations with verifiable Chocholá ceramics:

Acanceh
Ek' Balam (?)
Calcehtok
Ch'ich'
Dzibilchaltún
Jaina
Maxcanú
Peto
Sotuta
Ticul
Uxmal
Xcalumkin
Xpuhil

Sites with possible Chocholá ceramics:

Dzibilchaltún
Jaina
Mérida (Tiho)/Dzilam
Xcalumkin
Xpuhil

General locations connected with the style:

*Puuc Region*

Oxkintok region (Oxkintok, Calcehtok, Kupaloma Naox, Ch'ich,' Santa Bárbara)

*East of the Puuc Region*

Peto, Ticul, Mérida (Tiho)

*West of the Puuc Region*

Xcalumkin region (Xcalumkin, Ichmac, Xcochá, Xculoc, Xcombec), Jaina

Verifiable regions of manufacture:

Oxkintok

Possible regions of manufacture:

Xcalumkin
Another locus oriented east of the Puuc region

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